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Tabom Voices: A History of they Ghanaian Afro-Brazilian Community in their own Words

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Diaz, JD

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TABON OLUMKOLU
VOICES

a History of the
Ghanaian Afro-Brazilian Community
in their Own Words

queiroz galvão
CONSTRUCTION

The relics of Jamestown harbour in Accra, where the Tabom first landed on the Gold Coast, 2016
(Nilton Pereira)

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(Redd Kat Pictures)

Back page:
Sunset in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil
(Nilton Pereira)



Old James Town port



Sponsor's Note

Queiroz Galvão Ghana is honoured to support the development of a cultural project as important as this, which rescues and captures the history of an important African ethnic group who helped to build the Brazilian nation and won the right to return to live as free men and women in the Gold Coast now Ghana. A history full of struggles and hopes, which came true after the return of Africans to their homeland and along with this created ties in Brazil. We pay tribute to the greatness of these people and the lands overseas.

Our work in Ghana has sought to reflect this great cultural and emotional bond that has connected our two countries and that has also turned us into a successful partnership. By being a partner on the construction of infrastructure projects in Ghana, we are also cementing these historical ties and committed to supporting the development and progress of this great nation.

The future which is to be carved in concrete and asphalt, can only be sustained if we look at the past and honour our ancestors, their history, their struggles and thereby respect the cultural heritage that we have inherited.

We hope this publication will be received with celebration and joy for all, because it is another achievement of the cultural importance symbolized by the TABOM Community. It is as a record for future generations.

We are proud to know that we have a little piece of Brazil within the Ghanaian memory, and also to have this huge African cultural legacy that continues today, to shape the identity of the Brazilian people.

Marcos Alexandre da Silva
Managing Director – West Africa
October 2016

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Foreword

In the 180th anniversary year of the unique reverse migration of freed African slaves to the then Gold Coast and other areas of West Africa, the Embassy of Brazil in Ghana is proud to present for the first time the Voices of the Tabom, telling their story in their own words.

The Tabom are a small community who landed and stayed on the coast of Jamestown in modern Accra. Their journey over time, the challenges, triumphs, discoveries, assimilation into Ga culture, ownership and reflections are captured in song, dance, pictures and words presented here, to the public and to the community of scholars interested in what Pierre Verger called the "Flux and Reflux" in the South Atlantic.

Kindly sponsored by Queiroz Galvão, a Brazilian engineering company responsible for some of the landmarks in Ghana's current infrastructure development, this Coffee Table Book is part of a series of programs designed under the **Tabom Heritage Project** to bring to vivid life the reclaiming, investigation, documenting and contributions of the Tabom in all aspects of life in Ghana.

As part of the Tabom Heritage Project, for the first time since their ancestors stepped off the ships, a Tabom, Mr. Eric Morton, Master Drummer of Agbe music, fulfilled his manifest destiny and returned to the state of Bahia in Brazil in July 2016. Some pictures of this haunting and historic re encounter are included in this Coffee Table Book. A documentary of the 3 week journey in Brazil by Nilton Pereira, an award winning Brazilian filmmaker, and Juan Diego Diaz follows.

I am humbled by the vision and generosity of many here in Ghana - the sponsors of the Tabom Heritage Project as well as academics, artists, researchers, scientists and enthusiasts of Brazil and Ghana relations - who joined me in this celebration of the Tabom. I am confident that they will keep their engagement and I thank all of them deeply.

On behalf of the Embassy of Brazil in Ghana and with the support of Queiroz Galvão, I convey my sincere gratitude to the whole Tabom people in Ghana and abroad for keeping Brazil as part of their cherished memories by presenting this '**TABOM Voices, a History of the Ghanaian Afro-Brazilian Community in their Own Words**'.

Ambassador of Brazil to Ghana
Irene Vida Gala



Eric Morton in Cachoeira, Bahia, Brazil, July 2016 (Nilton Pereira)

Edited by

Juan Diego Diaz

Juan Diego Diaz, Eric Morton, Nilton Pereira and Thunder at Thunder's Drum Workshop, Accra July 2016 | (Nathaniel Akwetteh)

Notes from the Editor

Tabom is a made up word derived from the Portuguese expression "*está bom*" or its short form, "*tá bom*," roughly translating "it's all right." A small group of people in Accra, the capital of Ghana, are known today by this name. When asked about the origin of this name, members of this group explain that when their ancestors first arrived from Brazil many years ago, they could not understand any of the local languages and responded to every greeting with the phrase "tá bom, tá bom." Soon after locals began to refer to them as the Tabom (sometimes spelled Tabon) people. And the name stuck.

The Tabom is a community formed by the descendants of freed African enslaved people who resettled from Brazil to Ghana mostly during the 1830s. Upon arrival, a handful of families (some say seven, some say more) quickly integrated into the Ga ethnic group in then Dutch, British, and Danish dominated Accra. They forged strong ties with locals and contributed to the development, economy and culture of Accra in significant ways with skills brought from Brazil. Although the passing of time meant losing the Portuguese language and other aspects of the Brazilian culture they brought, they never forgot their ancestry and still identify strongly with Brazil.

This book is about the Tabom: their history, culture, challenges and aspirations, and the story is told through the voices of members of their community. The background story of the book is this: In 2012 the Brazilian Embassy in Ghana supported "The Graffiti Project", an initiative that brought together artists from Brazil and Ghana. The project was aimed to capture key aspects of the Tabom history and experience and to reflect them graphically on the walls of a historic building of the Tabom in Jamestown (Accra) called the Brazil House. In order to gain context and inspiration, five local artists (Kwabena Danso, Ian Quachie, Mohammed Awudu, Stephen Zion and Kwabena Adjei) visited Jamestown and met various members of the Afro-Brazilian Tabom community: dignitaries, elders and regular members. These encounters and conversations were recorded in the form of audio and video.

The book *'Tabom Voices: A History of the Ghanaian Afro-Brazilian Community in Their Own Words'* consists in transcribing and translating into English fragments of these interviews, organizing them by themes and contextualizing them with accompanying notes and pictures. The interviews are supplemented with more recent interviews conducted by the editor of this collection in 2015 and 2016 in the context of research on Tabom music. There are also some interviews conducted by Ben Amakye-Boateng in July 2014 during a major Tabom celebration. Like the painted walls of the Brazil House, this book aims to tell a history of the Tabom. But in this case the history is told by the Tabom themselves. This book serves as a concrete piece of oral memory that allows current and future Tabom to connect with a rich history that is rapidly changing.



The book is organized in six thematic areas: history, trades and skills, religion and spirituality, expressive culture, socio-political organization and identity. While helpful for the sake of organization, this subdivision is somewhat artificial and poses challenges as these themes are often tightly intertwined in the experience and account of the interviewees. For instance, for the majority of Tabom music is inseparable from spirituality or identity. Thus, the proposed fragmentation of the body of interviews is not meant to be clear cut. Aspects of each theme may cut across chapters. However, in order to maintain certain degree of thematic unity in each chapter, interviews with the same individual are at times cut and rearranged.

ABOUT FORMATTING

Although the bulk of the interviews are presented unaltered, there are various types of editorial notes to add clarity and context. Insertions between brackets as in [xxx], complete sentences or add relevant information and are meant to be read along with the main text. Insertions between parenthesis as in (xxx), clarify and give context but are not meant to be read along with the main text. Endnotes provide definitions and add more complete context about places, people, events and dates. Finally, each chapter is opened with a few introductory paragraphs locating the reader in each thematic area.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

Nearly half of the interviews were originally conducted in Ga and the other half in English. It is clear that any translation often leaves out nuances, oversimplifies or runs the risk of misrepresentation. Two graduate students at the University of Ghana fluent in Ga conducted the translations into English and the editor at times introduced changes to the text to eliminate redundancy or add clarity. These changes were cross checked with the translators, other Ga speakers and with some interviewees. In order to include various voices, a certain amount of repetition was allowed. But each repetition adds nuances to the story reflecting aspects of individual experience. The result is a story told at many voices with overlaps, uniqueness and, at times, disagreement. It is our hope that this compilation of memories becomes an important resource for present and future generations of Taboms, and for those interested in engaging and learning about them.

CREDITS:

Editor: Juan Diego Diaz

Research Assistants: Nathaniel Laryea Akwetteh, Genevieve Allotey-Pappoe and Benjamin Amakye-Boateng

Creative Concept and Design: Nana Yaa Ofori-Atta

Layout and Print: Legend Design House Ltd

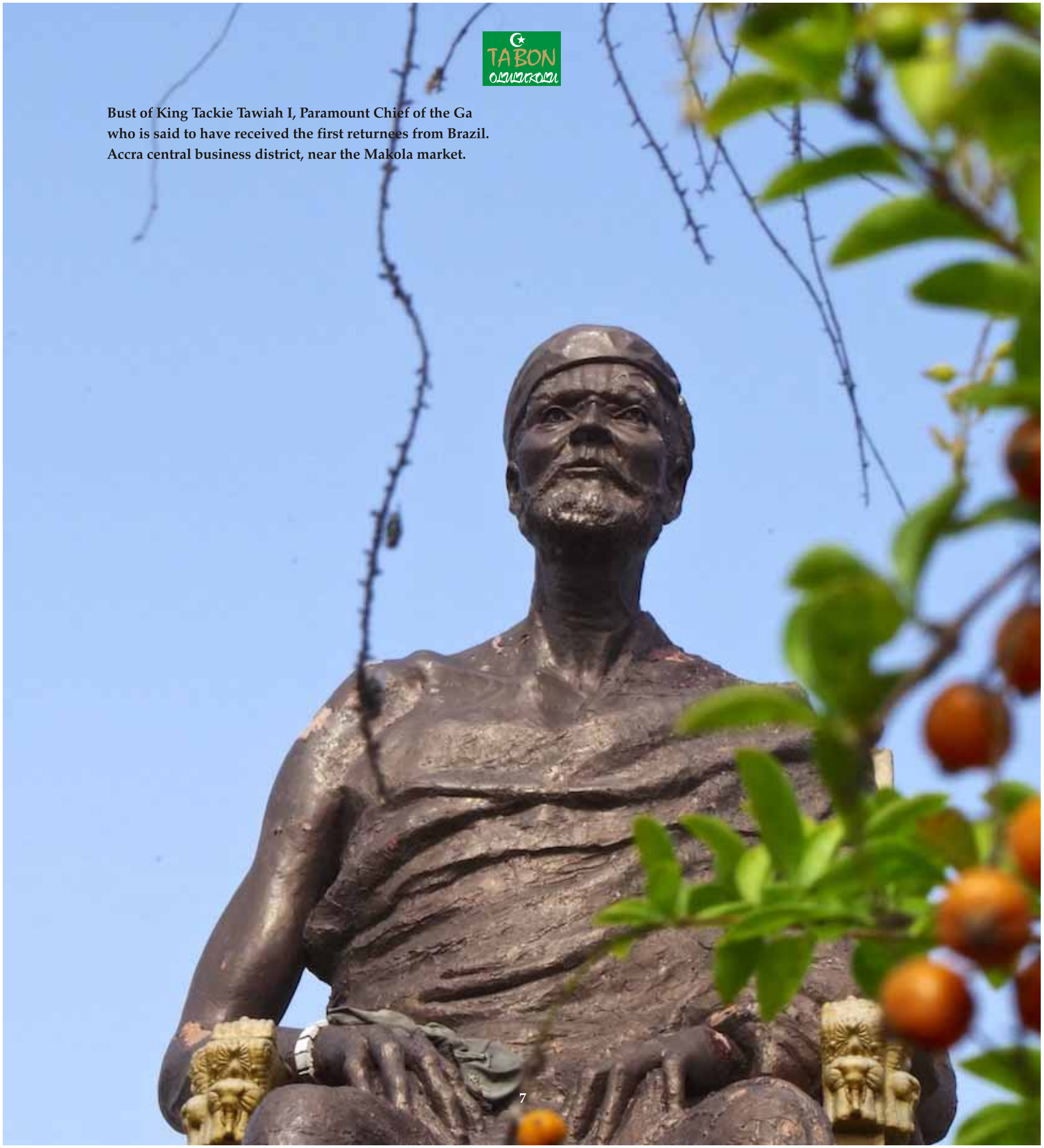
Sponsor: Queiroz Galvão Construction

A product of the **Tabom Heritage Project**

Supported by the Brazilian Embassy in Ghana



Nii Azumah V, Chief of the Tabom
Naa Awo Gbeke Abiana III, Queen Mother
November 2012
(Redd Kat Pictures)



Bust of King Tackie Tawiah I, Paramount Chief of the Ga who is said to have received the first returnees from Brazil. Accra central business district, near the Makola market.



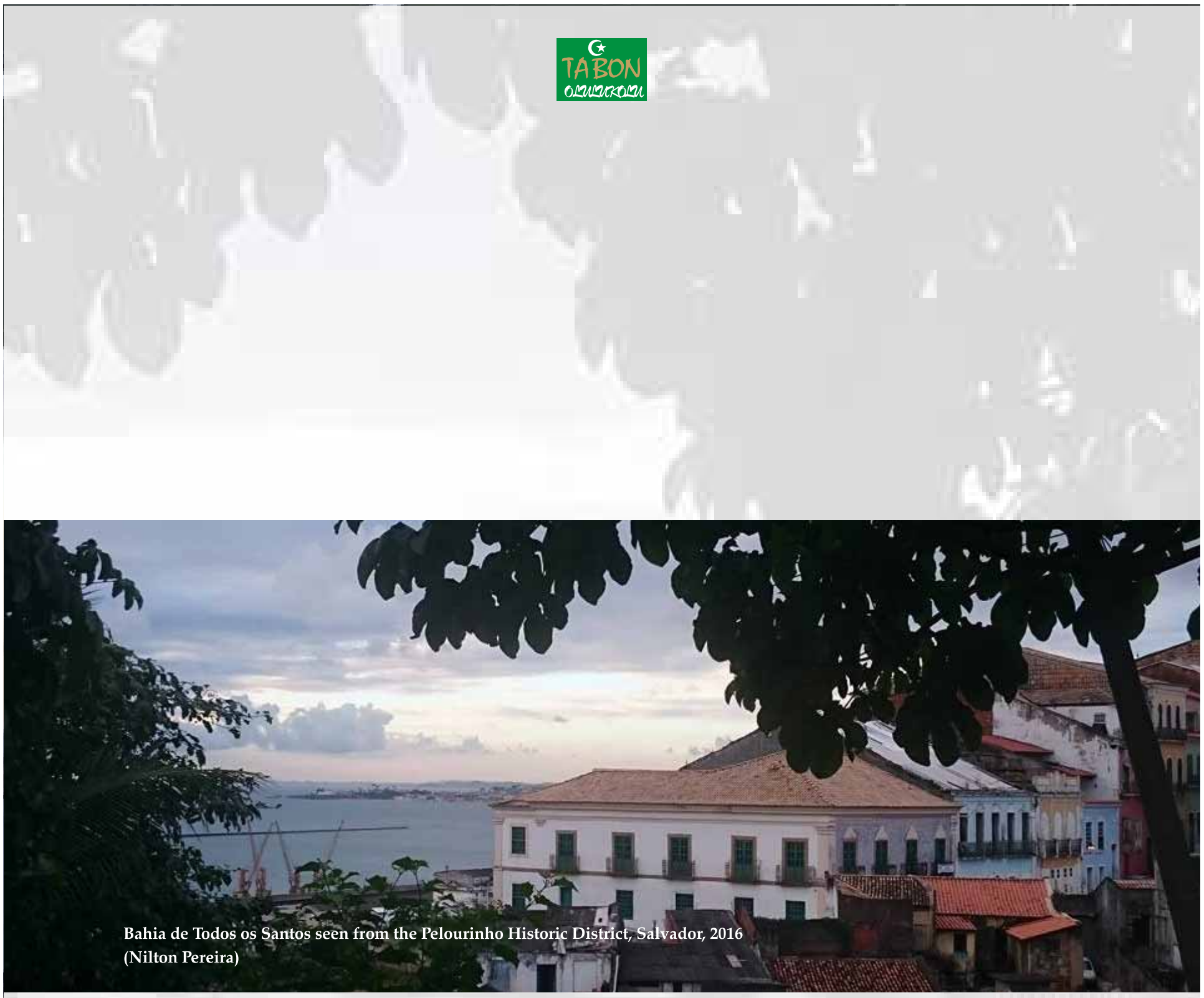
**This is a group picture representing the allied Chiefs,
then styled Kings of James Town (nee Kojo Ababio IV), Ussher Town (late Nee Tackie Tawiah) and
Christiansbourg (late Nee Noi Ababio IV) the King of Ussher Town is recognised as the first among them when they met together.
(Public Records and Archives Administration Department, Government of Ghana)**

Chapter 1
Histories, Movements, Encounters and Settlement

The history of the Tabom resembles that of most Ghanaian groups in that it is based on a narrative of displacement. Ewes, for instance, claim to have come from Yorubaland, and some Gas from the Middle East. But in the case of the Tabom, those displacements involve movements across the Atlantic, first Westward and then Eastward.

For many Tabom, the state of Bahia in the Brazilian Northeast is their ancestral homeland. Bahia was one of the main agricultural centers of Brazil during the times of Portuguese colonial rule and thus one of the main receptors of enslaved Africans who were forcibly sent to Brazil. During the first decades of the 19th century enslaved Africans and creoles organized many revolts against their enslavers. This period of rebellion peaked in 1835 when groups of Islamized Yoruba and Hausa speaking people in Bahia organized a major rebellion known as the Malês Revolt (See Reis 1995 for a full account of this revolt). The revolt was suppressed by the Brazilian Imperial government and a strong wave of repression against black people ensued. This was one of the main reasons that prompted a wave of return from Bahia to West Africa, including present-day Nigeria, Benin, Togo, and Ghana.

This chapter compiles oral memories about life in Brazil, the voyage to West Africa and arrival to Ghana, a possible stopover in Nigeria, the encounter and integration to the Ga people in Accra, a possible participation in local wars and the construction, destruction and renovation of historical sites. These stories are rooted in a poorly known history of the flow of people from Brazil to West Africa, a movement that some have called "reversed diaspora" (Essien 2010). More specifically, they reveal deep affective connections of the Tabom with Brazil and the Ga people of Ghana. These oral stories are diverse and, as often found in oral information, at times may be at odds with each other or with documented history.



Bahia de Todos os Santos seen from the Pelourinho Historic District, Salvador, 2016
(Nilton Pereira)



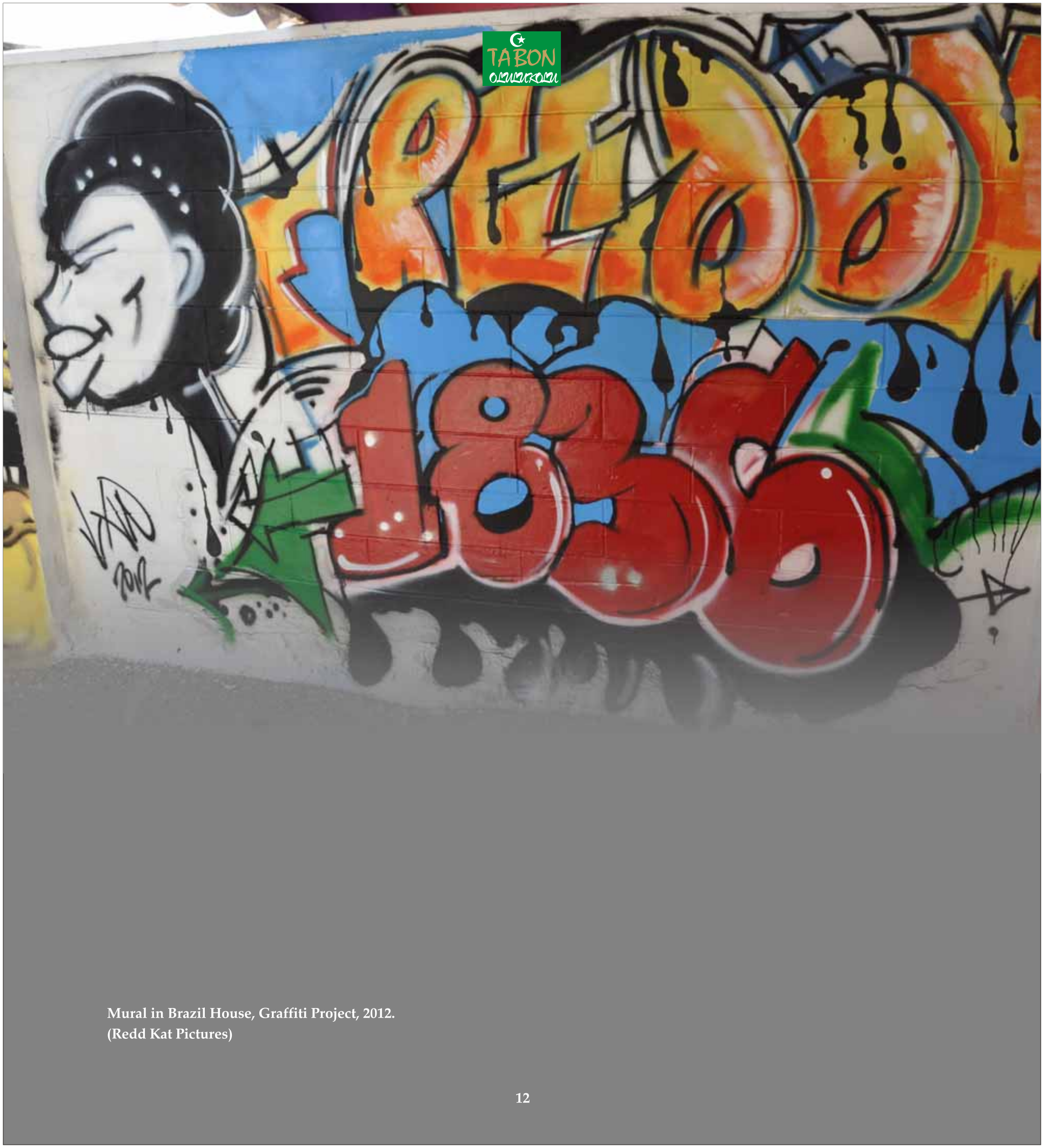
The Tabom Court at the Brazil House, Accra, November 2012 (Redd Kat Pictures)

Interviewer Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012
Can you talk about how your people came to Ghana?

Nii Azumah V (Tabom Chief): As you all know now, the Tabom were exported (forcefully relocated) to Brazil as slaves. They were there for so many years; those were the Ga that went to Brazil . . . In Bahia (Brazil) there was an interaction between the Malians and the people of the Gold Coast . . . Some of them had to work hard to buy their freedom because they went there as slaves working for their masters. Then, having bought their freedom, still they realized that there was too much racism within the country. Some of them decided to come back to their home . . . This resulted in the British government providing a merchant ship to bring those who could identify their homes. They all joined these merchants.

Most of the slaves who went to the Americas, about forty percent[1], came originally from West Africa . . . As the ship sailed along the West Coast of Africa, those who actually knew where they came from, disembarked in their homeland . . . So when they came to Nigeria, Nigerians disembarked. Fortunately for those from Ghana, the group was led by Nii Azumah, the leader of the seven different families who first arrived, and who was able to recognize their homeland . . . When they came they met Mantse Nii Tackie Tawiah[2] , the Ga Mantse at Otublohum. But back then Nii Ankrah[3] was the actual chief. He received our great grandfathers and gave them the place where they presently are, the Brazil House. So it was there that they settled.

[Mahama] Sokoto[4], who was from Nigeria, joined the Gold Coasters and became the Tabom chief spokesman. So he went to meet the Ga Mantse. Because they (the Ga people) had become over populated there (in Accra), they (the Tabom) were given [a piece of land] from the railway station down to Kokomlemle and beyond Circle, then going towards the eastern sides.



Mural in Brazil House, Graffiti Project, 2012.
(Redd Kat Pictures)



Mango Tree Road in Adabraka, Accra, September 2016 (Nathaniel Akwetteh)

Because they were coming from Brazil where they had plantations that were well known, they were given another plot [in Accra which] they cultivated . . . so they decided to plant mango, cassava and all this . . . And as of now, we still have some of the mango trees which were planted by this people, standing there as evidence symbolizing their presence.

That was made during the tribal war [that the] Ga and others were fighting [against] the Ashantis . . . The Ga Mantse pushed the returnees to participate in the war.

. . So the Taboms led the war at Aŋuna[5] (probably refers to the Awuna Wars). That Aŋuna war was important . . . The Tabom people won. They captured and had prisoners of war, and brought them down to Accra and settled them at the cemetery [area] . . . Now it's called Awudome because this is where the people brought from Aŋuna settled. The then Government requested the Aŋuna people to choose a burial place for them and chose Awudome, so this people from Aŋuna were sent to St. Theresa's Square which is still called Awudome. So, as of now when the name Awudome is mentioned, it rings a bell back to the Tabom people.

Now, how did the word Tabom come to be? When they came [to Accra], having been in Brazil, a Portuguese speaking country, they spoke in that language but the Ga at the time didn't understand . . . so when they met, they (the Ga) said these are the people that speak Tabom, which means "how are you? I'm fine." That's how the Ga gave them the name . . . and that became the name of the Brazilian descendants. In view of all history, we were attached to the Otublohum chieftaincy[6]. Otublohum is made out of [people who came from] three [different places]. It's made up of [the] Dadeban [people who came] from the Central Region, the Atifi [who came] from the Eastern Region and finally, we (the Tabom) came last . . . Our position in Otublohum is Benkumhene—that is, when the Otublohum chief sits, the Tabom Mantse has to sit by his legs [at the left wing].

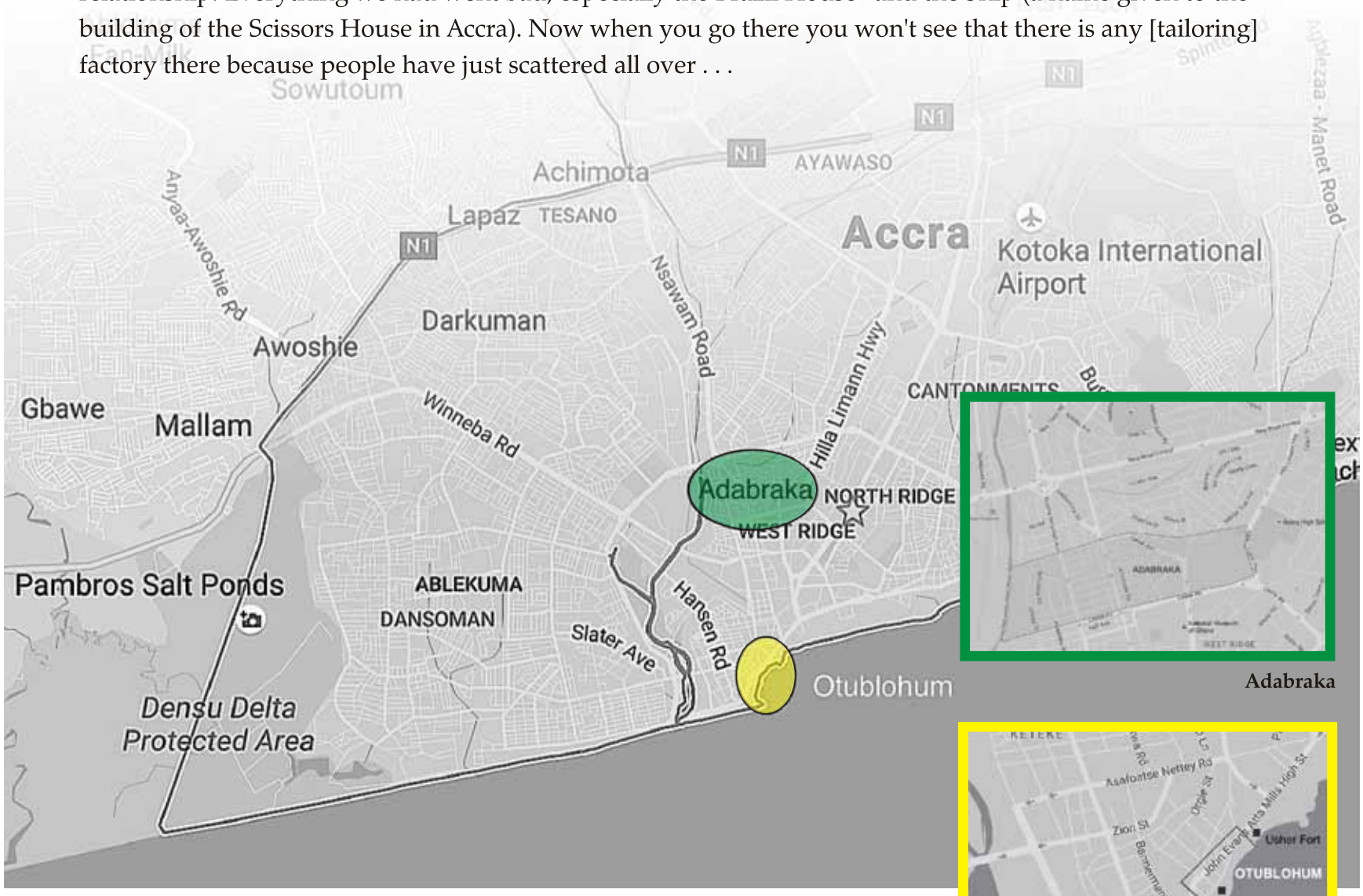
There was a time when the [Ga] chief, Nii Tackie Tawiah, was exiled by the British government (in 1875 he went to Elmina). When he was going, he left everything with the Tabom Mantse, Nii Alasha (aka Nii Azumah II) . . . Now, when Nii Tackie Tawiah came back to Accra, my great grandfather (Nii Alasha) wanted to hand back the chieftaincy to him but he [said that] Nii Alasha should continue to rule because he was able to organize well the Ga states. But Nii Alasha couldn't because he was so honest and sincere with his master because Nii Tackie Tawiah [had] saved us. How could we take all these things (the political power) from him? Since then, we have been in close relationship with him (King Tackie Tawiah I and all Ga Mantses). We attend their regional House of Chiefs' Council[7].



Intersection of Tabon Loop and Houphouet Boigny Road, Accra, January 2016 (The editor)

Unfortunately, when we were given the land [by the Ga Mantse] and our people cultivated the Asylum Down area, there were a lot of problems. The land was [initially] apportioned to the Brazilians and the place was called Brazilian land. It was [meant] for [collective] farming but some were so clever that they registered the land with their individual names . . . some even sold theirs [and only a] few decided to stay there. Some of those who left went to Ashongman to do the farming. Unfortunately, they met unfavorable circumstances so they couldn't do much[8].

When our people came, they had a very good rapport with the Ga Manste and the other leaders. But after the death of our great grandfather (Nii Alasha), the relationship between the Tabom and the Ga Traditional Council started coming down due to the fact that our people were not so much keen to keep the relationship. Everything we had went bad, especially the Brazil House[9] and the Ship (a name given to the building of the Scissors House in Accra). Now when you go there you won't see that there is any [tailoring] factory there because people have just scattered all over . . .



Tabom traditional areas in Accra
(The editor)

Adabraka

Otublohum



Naa Riza Nelson (on the right)
at Shango Priestess' initiation on July 27, 2014
(Ben Amakye-Boateng)

Interviewer **Ben Amakye-Boateng, July 2014, in Ga**

Can you talk about the history of the Tabom?

Naa Riza Nelson: [When the Tabom] people arrived [to Accra], they lowered a [small] boat which was attached to the ship . . . It is said that two or three of them [got into the boat] and disembarked onto the shore . . . near the Usher Fort around the Dadeban shrine. They didn't understand Ga so they used hand signs to ask for the head of town and the natives pointed in the direction of Dadeban Naa. Then they (the returnees) decided to go there. The natives went with them, still communicating using hand signs and went to the palace of Nii Tackie Tawiah, who was the king there. Now if you saw these [Tabom] strangers coming you'll be scared. They were strangers but when they arrived they were tall and wore [European styled] coats and top hats. When they met the Mantse, they couldn't understand each other's language so they communicated in sign language. They [the Tabom] indicated their place of origin. So they went back to the boat with the [local] people. The natives waited while our people brought their ship to the shore. The Brazilians brought with them animals, rice, cloth, a big basin and sewing machines.

[Long time ago] a lady did something that disturbed me. When [Dr Kofi Abrefa] Busia (Prime Minister of Ghana, 1969-1972) was sacking people (deporting illegal immigrants under the Aliens Compliance Order, 1969) she (that lady) asked us (the Tabom) whether we were leaving the country. She said that since we were rich we should go and leave our wealth behind. And I told her how Accra came to be [thanks to our people's contributions]. One old man [who was present] . . . said to the young lady that, according to his father, in the olden days when our grandfathers and grandmothers went to war with the Ashanti people, they [the Ashantis] were killed like ants.

In those days, there was a war because the Ashantis were trying to take the [Ga] land and the Ashantis were killing the Ga by scores. So if you [as a Tabom] had come to this land, what would you do? You would help.

In the course of the battle it was said that a bird was hovering over. The bird makes the noise “ki, ki, ki.” The Tabom were able to use these bird sounds to find out the position of the Ashantis. But the Ga were ignorant of all these tactics. So whenever they (the Ga) were asked to lead [the troops], they were destined to die. So the Ga were pushed aside and our fathers and grandfathers took the front positions. The Tabom were then guided [by the birds to victory].



Mural, Graffiti Project, Brazil House, November, 2012
(Redd Kat Pictures)

When our grandfathers came back [from war], they were given land from Adabraka to Amusudai to Asylum Down. But all the lands have been sold. Some of us didn't get any of that. Our fathers did foolish things with the land. They didn't give us any. But that doesn't worry us. Our forefathers told us that story and we hid it in our knees (we preserved and passed it on to the younger ones) . . .

The Ashantis were pulled like this (gestures fish being pulled out of the water with the ropes of a fishing net). As they were being pulled, the [Tabom] were singing the song . . .

Ashante 'otobi kolé bawa shé Kolé bawa jijá, jijá Kole bawa ṣán ṣán ṣán	“Tiny Ashantis They can't stand us Let's scare them away”

Agbe song intoned by Mrs. Naa Riza Nelson commemorating
“the time when the Tabom joined the Ga to defeat the Ashantis.”
Song in Yoruba with phonetic transcription.
Translation and transcription by Mr. Salomon Armah.

So we laid the Ashanti on the ground. So now if a Ga speaks badly or slanders a Brazilian person, it means that he/she is not a real Ga.



Christiana Lartey the current Asafoanyemei of the Tabom, Brazil House, July 2016 (Nilton Pereira)

Interviewer **Juan Diego Diaz, April 2016**

What do you know about the history of the Tabom?

Edwin Brown: Growing up, I was told that the Tabom are people who came from Brazil. I also heard people mentioning the Brazil House. I cannot really recollect the year in which the Tabom arrived in Ghana but it was in the olden days.

Interviewer

What stories have you heard about the Tabom?

Edwin Brown: My grandmother told us that a ship would come and take all Taboms to Brazil. But I do not know exactly where the Tabom came from in Brazil. When they (the Tabom) are singing, the song text I hear is not in the local Ga language. Instead, it is [in] a kind of Yoruba and when I interrogate them, what they say is that when coming from Brazil, they stopped over in Nigeria for a while—hence a link with Nigeria. But I was very little when they told me these stories. It was recently that I visited the Brazil House at Jamestown. I was told it was built by the Brazilian Embassy through some fundraising.



Edwin Brown dancing *agbe* at a Tabom funeral ceremony, Timber Market, Accra, March 2014 (Ben Amakye-Boateng)

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012, in Ga**

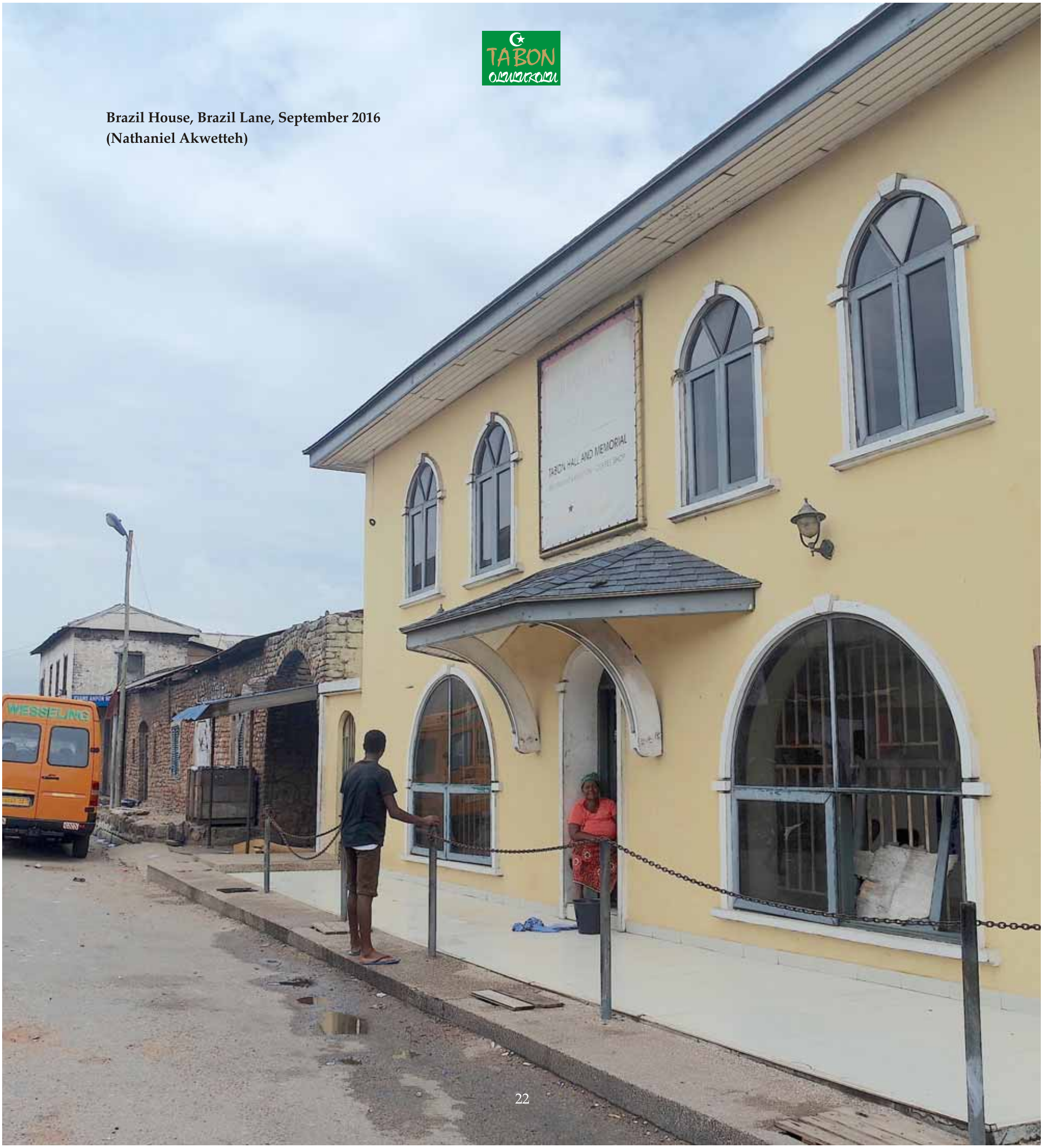
Do you remember any stories from your ancestors and their journey when they came here?

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo (Nii Azumah's Linguist): Our return journey was made by many people, some from Mali and Senegal. As the ship sailed through the [West African] coast, those [who came from Brazil] were asked to identify their [ancestral] land. We identified the Ga land, or the Gold Coast. Some stayed in Nigeria, others [stayed] in Togo and Benin. All these people are Taboms from Bahia in South America and we still maintain the link.

Interviewer

Are there any personal stories about individual families of the Taboms on their journey to Africa?

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: I do not know what happened on the journey but, like I have said, we have the Asafoanyemei and Asafoatsemei[10] in our family and whatever we want to do, we do it right. We also have something called Shango who was brought from Brazil and it is for all Taboms. I do not know much about Shango.



Brazil House, Brazil Lane, September 2016
(Nathaniel Akwetteh)

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012, in Ga**

Can you talk about the history of your ancestors?

Naa Afua Aminatu II (Queen Mother's Linguist): Considering how they (the Tabom ancestors) came back to Ghana, I will say that they [first] went to war or were enslaved and then [were] freed. They therefore felt the need to trace their roots and go back [to Ghana]. You see, it was not their wish to migrate from Ghana to Brazil [in the first place]. It was for some [external] reason that they found themselves in Brazil. Moreover, they stayed there for a long period of time. But they wanted to trace their roots. That is why they pushed to come [back to Ghana].

Meanwhile, on their journey back to Africa, they did not come straight to Ghana. Instead, they passed through Nigeria. A large number of the Nigerians are Muslims as a result of which the Taboms also started practicing the religion. They continued to practice the Islamic religion till they got to Ghana. As they continued to domicile in Ghana, some people held on to the Islamic religion while others converted to Christianity. So we have both the Islamic and Christian religion being practiced in the Tabom community.

Interviewer

What do you know of the women that came from Brazil. The more prominent women and what role did they play?

Naa Afua Aminatu II: The women that came were called Naa Memuna . . . Abiana. They accompanied them (the men). There is also Comfort Pelegrino.



Plaque on the front wall of Brazil House, September 2016
(Nathaniel Akwetteh)

Interviewer **Juan Diego Diaz, July 2016**
Please introduce yourself.

Roland Boye (Tabom from the Brazil House): My name is Roland Boye. I live here in [the] Brazil House. I am a descendant of Mahama Nassu (also spelled Mama Nasso), one of the returnee slaves from Brazil. Yeah! This is his house. From Brazil, they arrived in Ghana in 1836. Behind me is the harbor where they first arrived. Some of them settled in Ghana and Togo, while others went to Benin and Nigeria. The Ghanaian settlers settled here on this lane called Brazil Lane.

Road signs at the entrance to the Brazil Lane
in Otublohum, Accra, July 2016
(The editor)



The original leaders built about seven houses on the Brazil Lane but later, they all sold their houses due to their business trade. However, where I stand now belongs to Mahama Nassu, who married a royal [woman] from Otublohum. As a result of his marriage to the Otublohum royal, he couldn't sell his property like the others. He had to leave his property for his descendants. I am one of his descendants here in [the] Brazil House where I was born and still live.



King Tackie Tawiah I, Paramount Chief of the Ga, 1862 - 1902
(Public Records and Archives Administration Department, Government of Ghana)

Interviewer

When the Brazilians arrived, they met with the Ga. Can you speak about that?

Roland Boye: When the Brazilians arrived, they met the then Ga Mantse, King Tackie Tawiah who handed them over to the Otublohum Mantse to assign a portion of the Ga land to them as their settlement. In the 1800's, the Ga were not interested in settling on the coast. They lived across the Accra High Street and gave this portion of the land belonging to the Otublohums to the returnee slaves. The returnees built their own houses and settled in this place which is now called Brazil Lane. They lived with the Ga, partaking in every Ga activity as Gas because they are Ghanaians. They were always invited to every function organized by either the Ga Mantse or the Otublohum Mantse. They were like a family.

The Ga, however, could not speak the Portuguese language and therefore referred to the returnee slaves as "Tabom" whenever they saw them. That is how we got the name Tabom.

We now have a Tabom Mantse called Nii Azumah V. The first Azumah was one of the seven leaders [who arrived] from Brazil. The twins of Azumah are the Nelsons, one of the leaders of the Tabom. Mahama Nassu was a flag bearer of the Tabom who had seven leaders when they arrived. This house [next to the Brazil House] is called Franklin House because it was sold to the Franklin. The third house is called Azumah House and that is where the leader lived.

Interviewer

I understand this house was renovated recently, how was it before that renovation?

Roland Boye: It looked terrible so the Brazilian President Lula and his ambassador visited this place [in 2005] which they referred to as a historic house of a returnee slave. They later came back [in 2007] to renovate this house and put it in order. We put on an exhibition show of our Brazilian history.

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012**

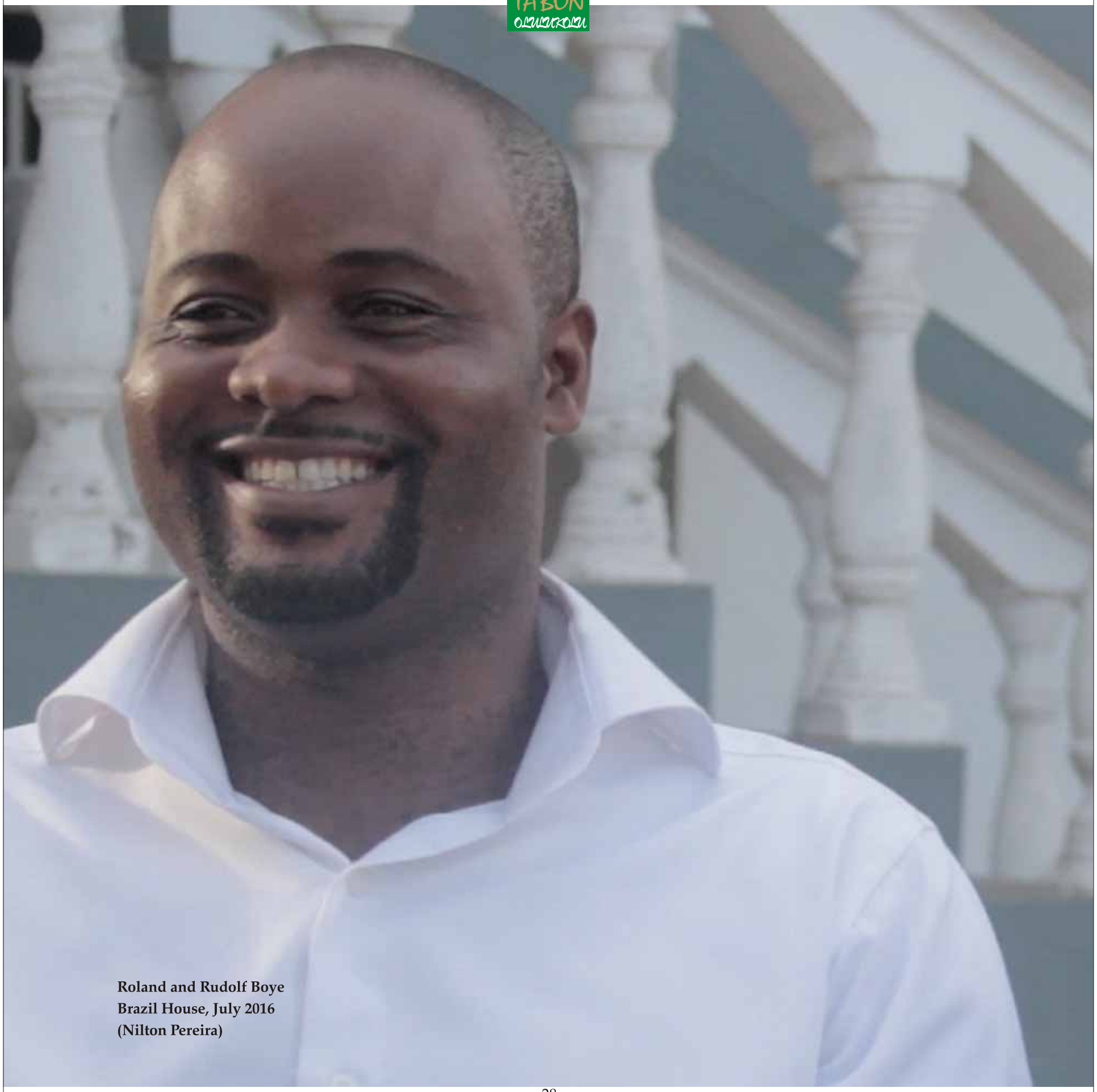
We are in the Brazil House and I know that there are a couple of other houses here (in the same neighborhood). What are the names of those houses?

Rudolph Boye: We have Azuma House and this is one of the houses, the house on my left and they sold it to a British solicitor called Franklin so you can see it on one of the brochures that it is written on the back, "Franklin House."

Interviewer

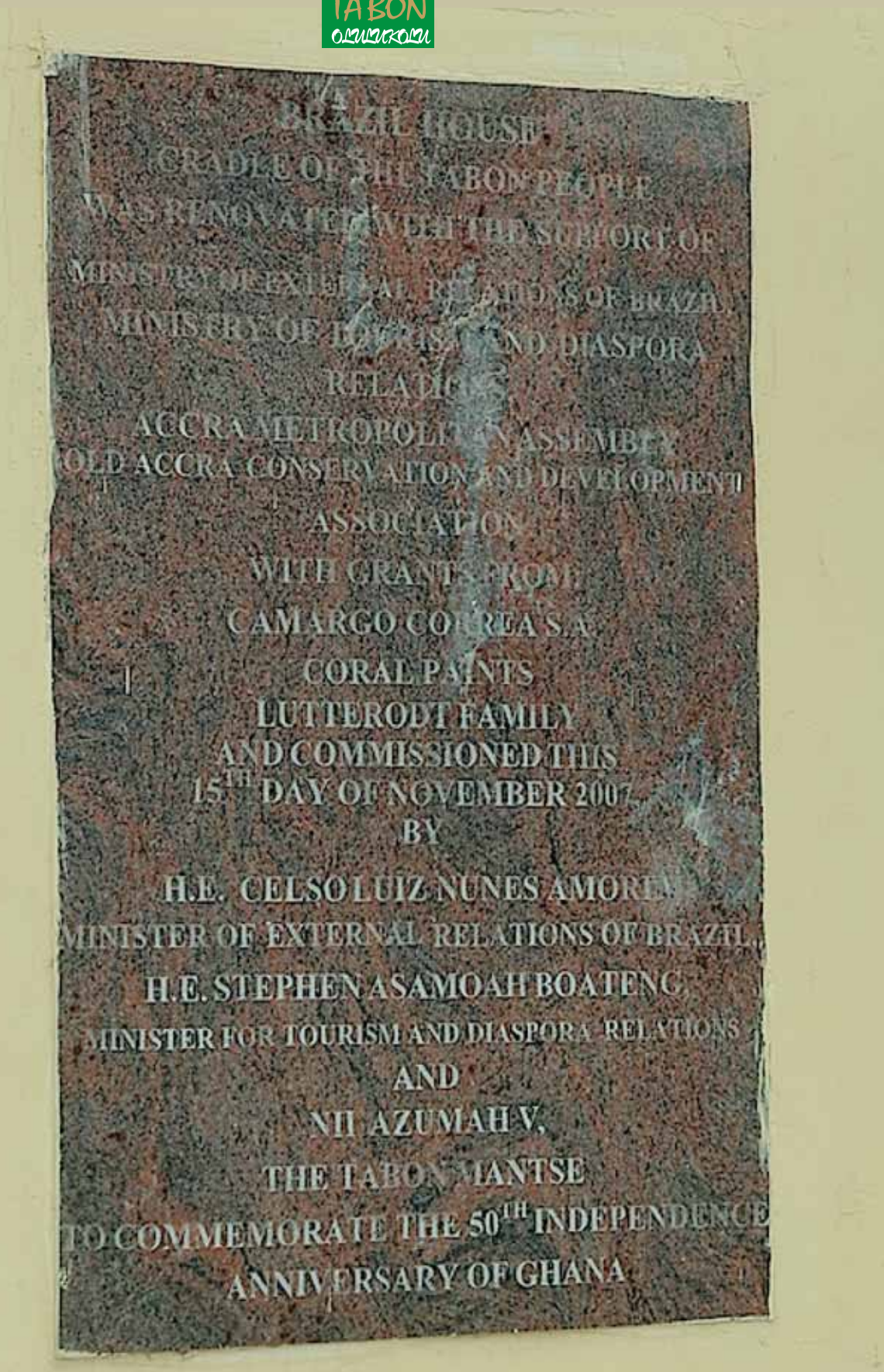
But who did it belong [originally] to?

Rudolph Boye: One of the families of one of the seven leaders. I've forgotten the name.



Roland and Rudolf Boye
Brazil House, July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)





Second plaque on the front wall of Brazil House, September 2016
(Nathaniel Akwetteh)

Interviewer

So [the] Franklin House was sold and which other houses [were sold too]?

Rudolph Boye: Azuma House and even the next house was sold to a company. By then this area was a harbor. [Now] they [have] moved [the harbor] to Tema, but [during] those days this was a commercial area where they had wholesales. That is where the ships and everything came through, those days.

Interviewer

And were the Taboms involved in trading as well?

Rudolph Boye: Yeah. You know they are (were) farmers. They farmed a lot so you [would] see them selling oranges, fruits, sugarcane and a whole lot of fruits.

Interviewer

I'm also aware that as part of their trading, they (the Tabom) also traded human beings because they came at a time when the slave trade was ongoing. Are you aware of that story?

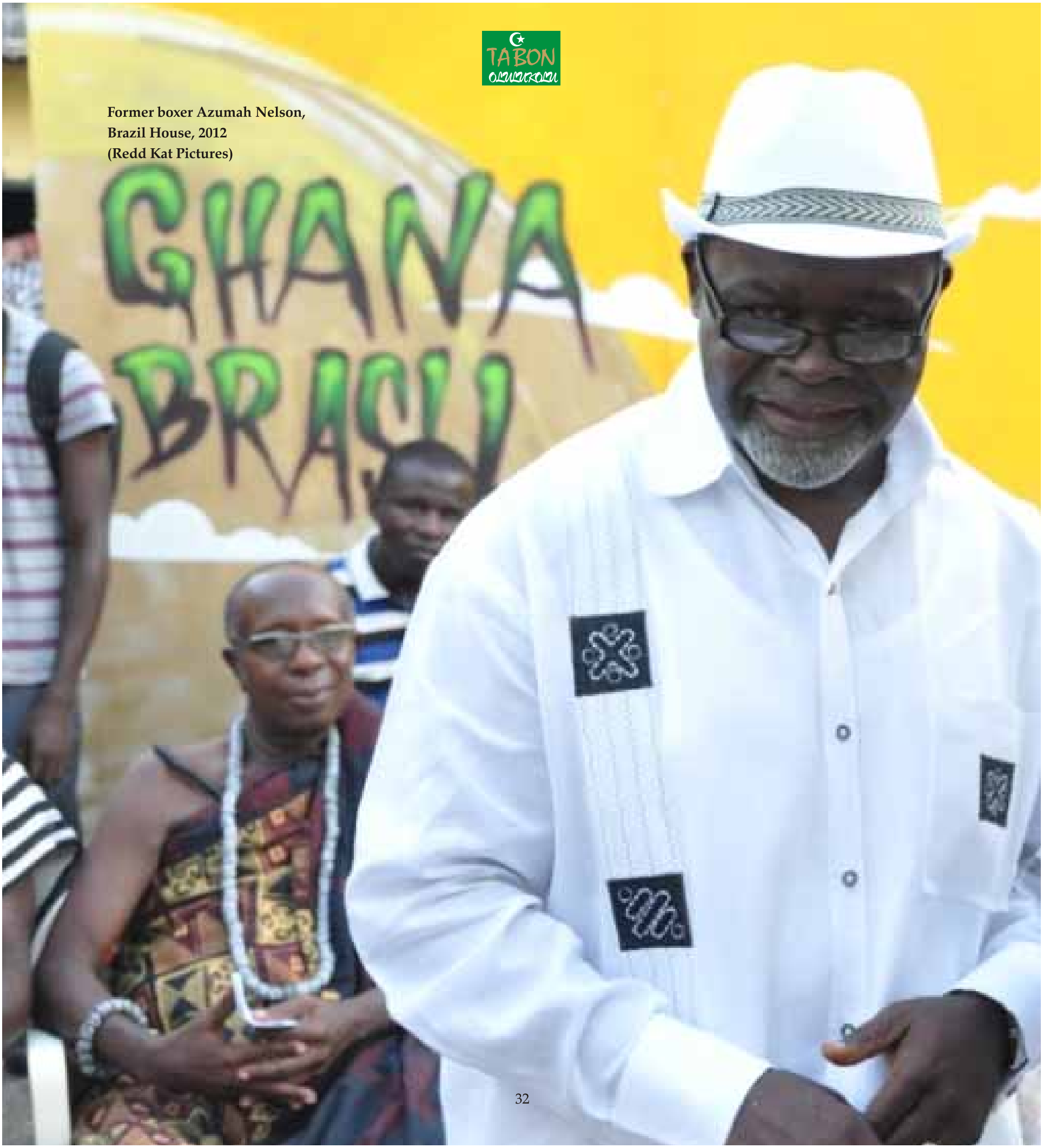
Rudolph Boye: I don't know the actual facts so I don't want to talk about it[11].

Interviewer

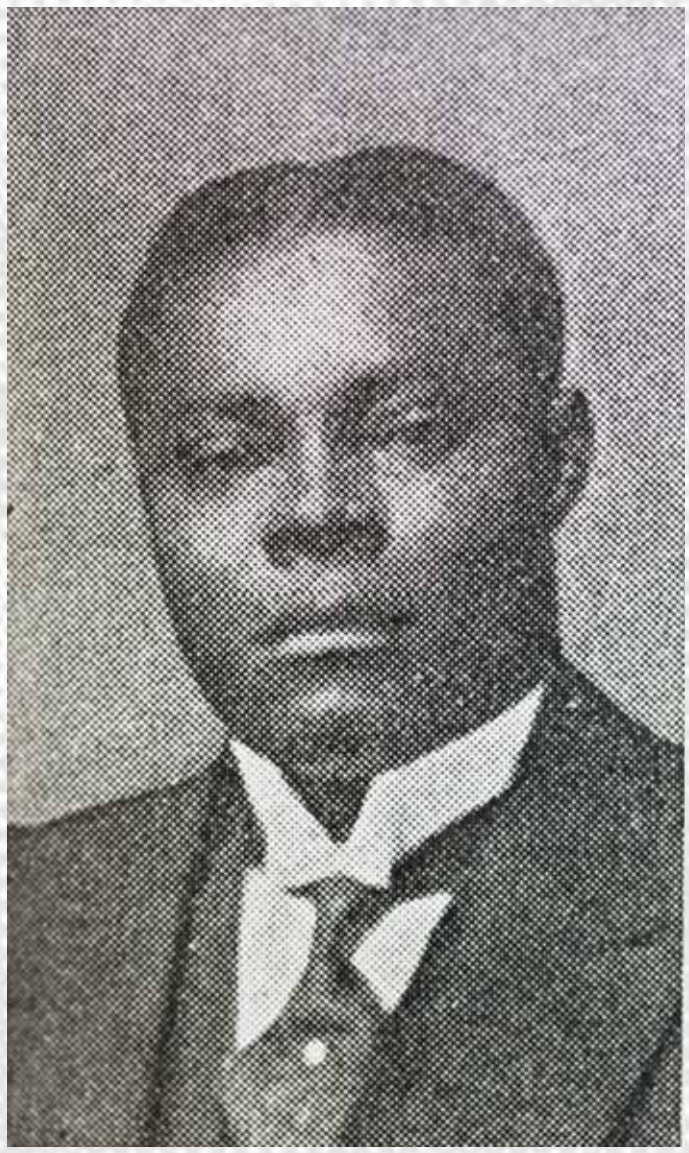
Do you know of the stories of the other families that came or it's just your [family] story you know of?

Rudolph Boye: That is all we know. They were serving the king, some sold their houses but Nii Mahama Nassu, one of their leaders who married to Naa Tsitse, that is the daughter of the Otublohum Mantse, [did not sell] . . . Other [Tabom] people just sold their houses and built houses at Asylum Down. They also have their descendants. So when you see a Tabom chief, that chief will come from [the] Azumah family, that is why we have Nii Azumah the I, the II, the III, the IV. That is their family. If they want to do something they will say they are coming to the Aflanganye or Aflangatse house to do something because this is the Aflanga house. Aflanga means flag because when the chiefs are coming, they throw flags.

Roland Boye: Don't forget [that] the Mahama Nassu family has contributed a lot to this nation. We have in our family the first Lady Chief Justice Georgina Wood[12] and we have Mrs Atta Achian. She's a lawyer . . .

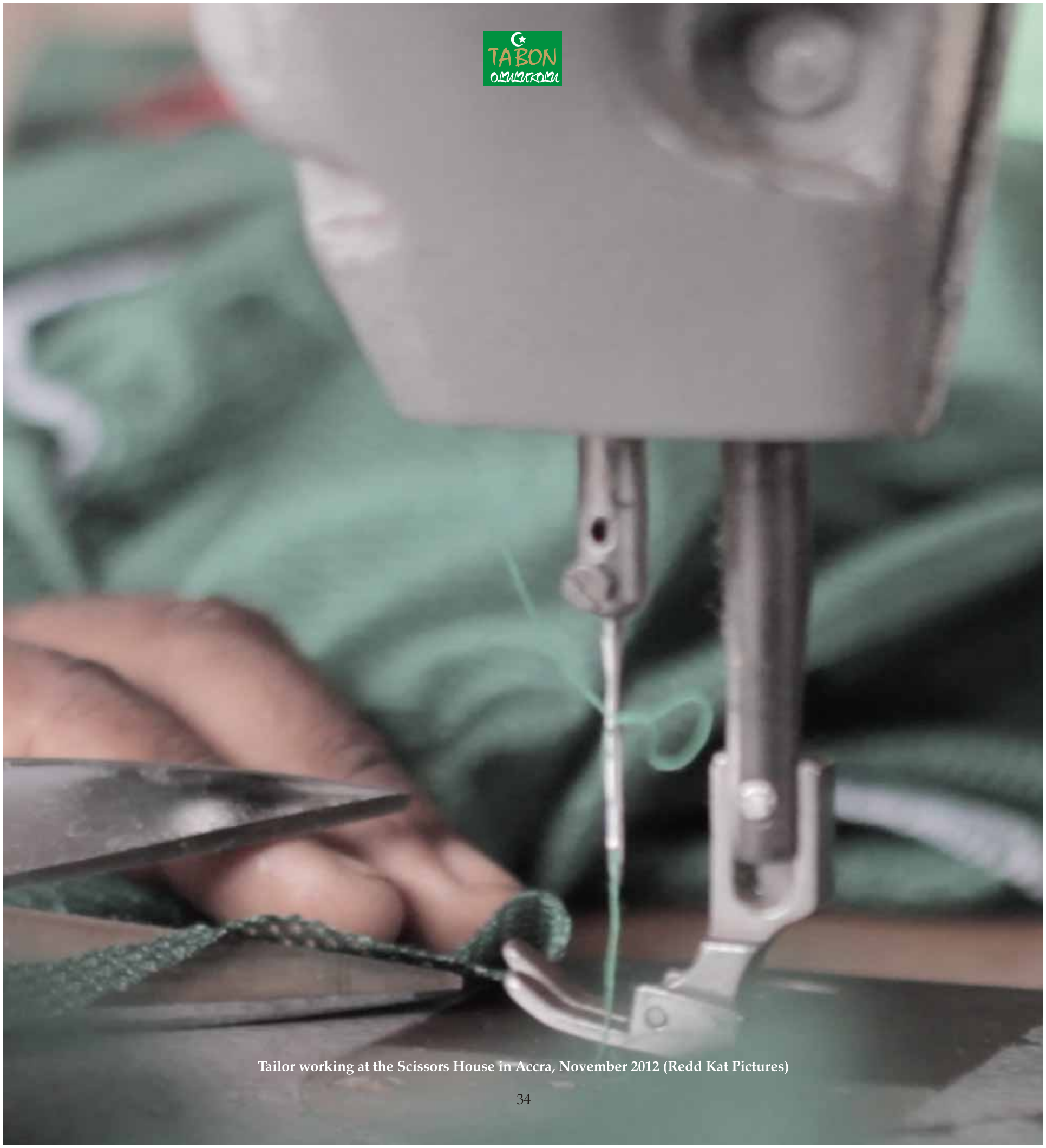


Former boxer Azumah Nelson,
Brazil House, 2012
(Redd Kat Pictures)



T. JONES NELSON, Esquire.
Born 28th August, 1884.
Accountant, West African Lighterage.
—— Fine Manhood. ——

(Public Records and Archives Administration Department, Government of Ghana)



Tailor working at the Scissors House in Accra, November 2012 (Redd Kat Pictures)

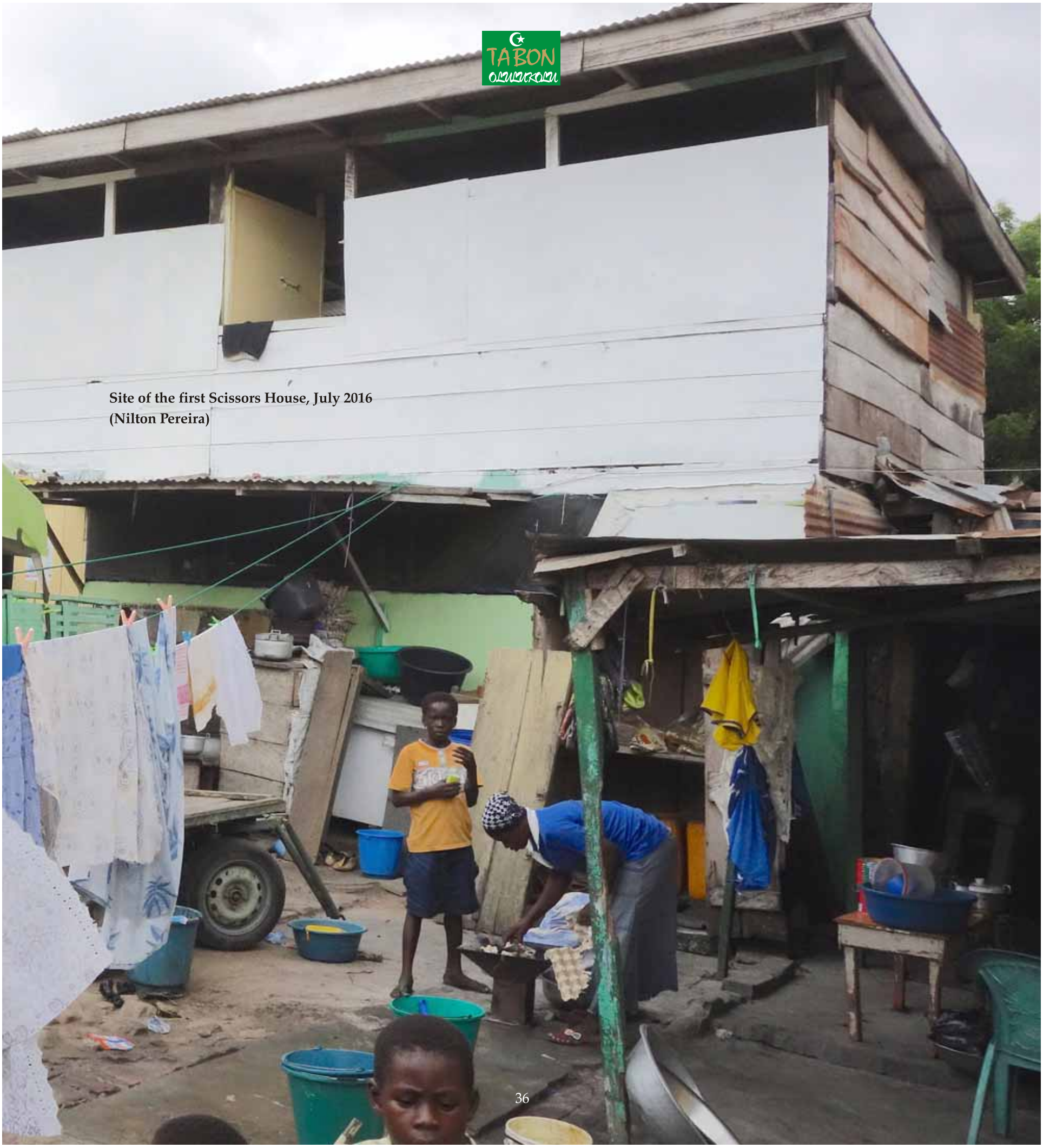
Chapter 2

"Our Baggage". What we Brought to Ghana

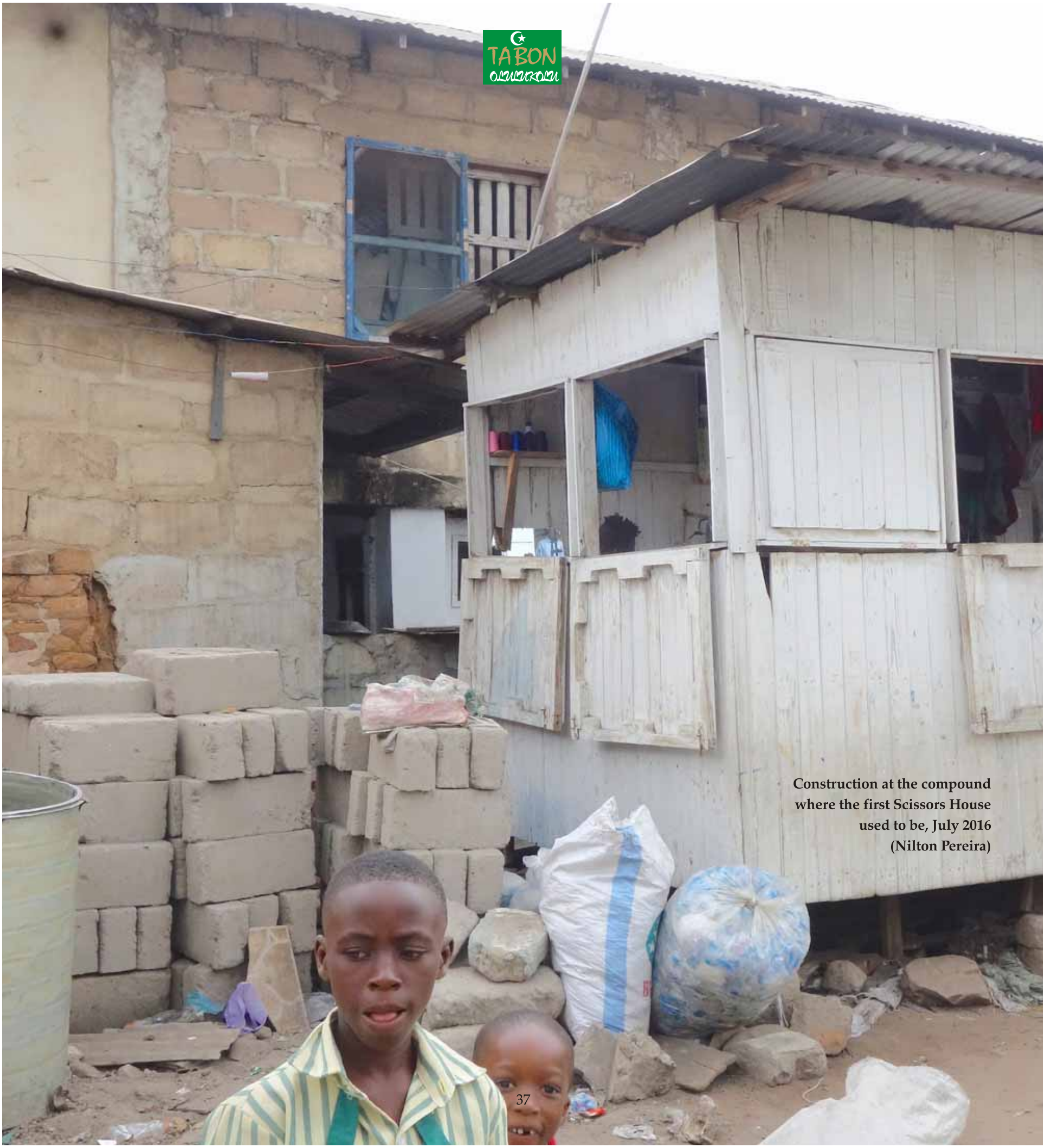
The Tabom are known and often appreciated in Ghana for certain skills they brought from Brazil. They include tailoring, masonry, carpentry, well digging, irrigation techniques, blacksmithing, and block architecture. This chapter puts together interviews illustrating how these skills have contributed to the development of Ghana while being central for Tabom pride and identity.



Mural of Tabom tailors and Chiefs, Scissors House, Accra, July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)



Site of the first Scissors House, July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)



Construction at the compound where the first Scissors House used to be, July 2016 (Nilton Pereira)



A well built by Brazilian returnees
in the Salaga Market Street, Accra, September 2016
(Nathaniel Akwetteh)

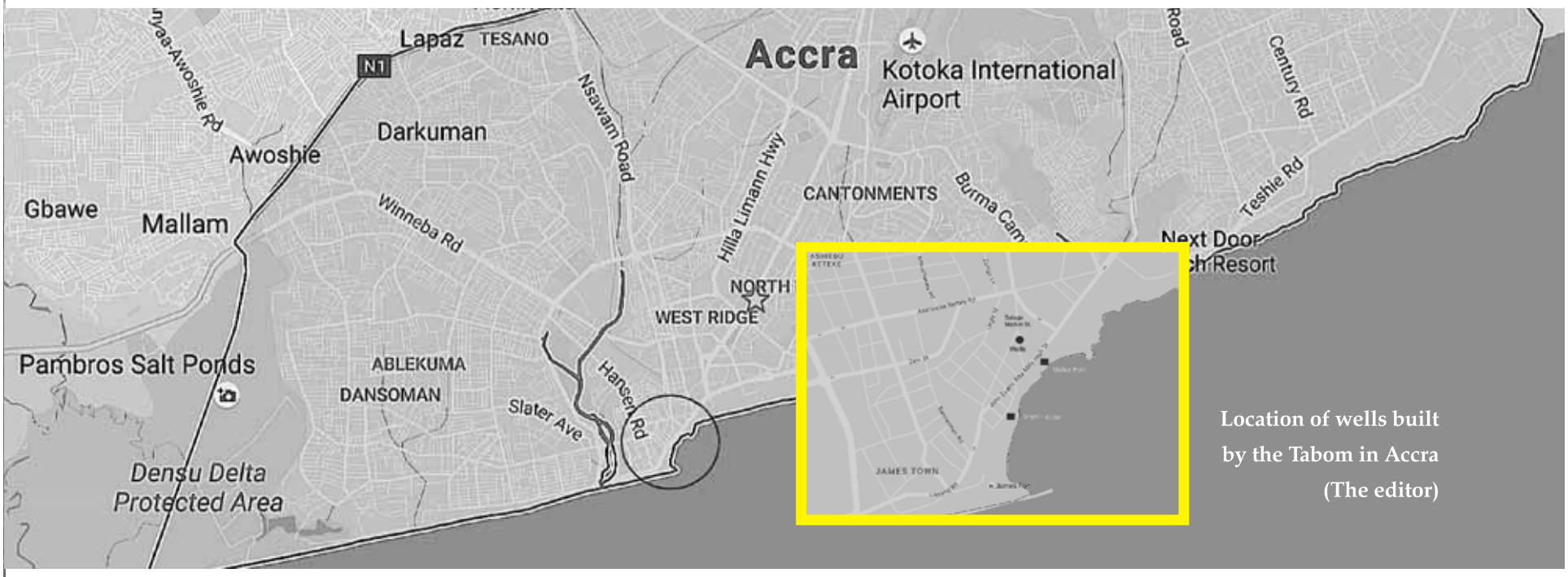
Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012, in English**

Can you talk about how your people came to Ghana?

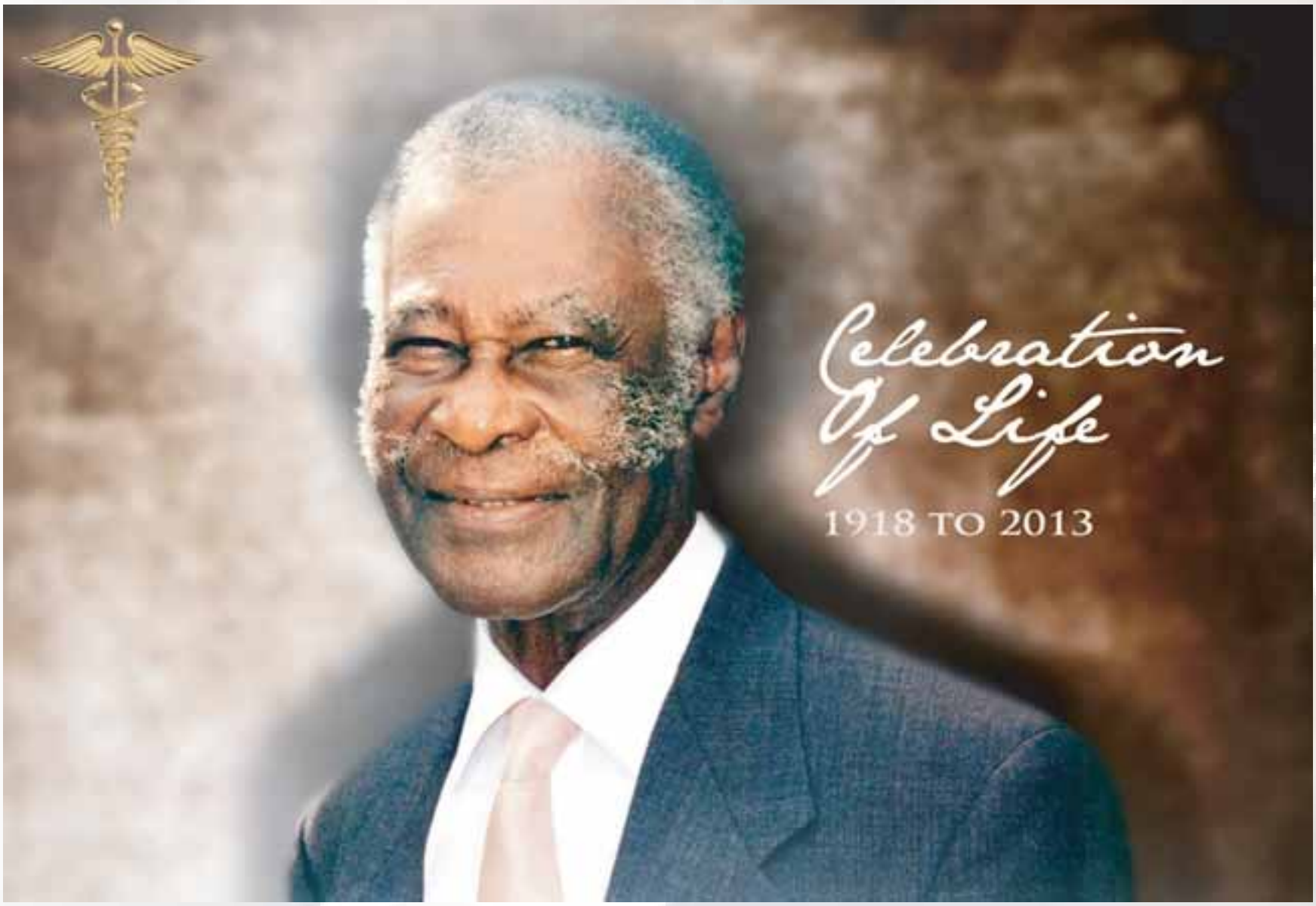
Nii Azumah V: . . . But our people didn't come empty handed. They came with skills and various things like tailoring, gold smithing, carpentry, masonry, etc. And so they started to bring up the Ga states. As of now, when the name of tailoring [is mentioned] in Accra, or Ghana as a whole, the first name that comes to be realized is Dan Morton's tailoring shop. He was trained by my great grandfather, who was a master tailor. By then they were sowing dresses for the Ghana (then Gold Coast) army, for regiment and custom exercise, and the police.

They also built a house called the First Scissors House, which was built in the form of a ship, that is the SS Salisbury that brought the voyage (the first Brazilians to Accra) . . . so the house was also known as the Ship . . . Unfortunately, the whole thing got burned in 2007[13] . . . it's a very unfortunate incident. My great grandfathers' house was then on fire and I became a bit disturbed . . . because as the chief, administratively, I am responsible for the house.

When our people came, they (the Ga) were not having [many sources of] water, so they (the Tabom) started to dig wells . . . And we have up till date sites where some of these [wells] are. The main one is in Salaga Market [Street]. There is another one at the Akotobu school. There is one at Adabraka (a neighborhood in Accra) just behind Azumah Nelson's [the former world champion boxer] place.



Location of wells built by the Tabom in Accra (The editor)



Poster of Dr. Titus Aruna Morton, 'Celebration of Life', 2014 (Rawlings)



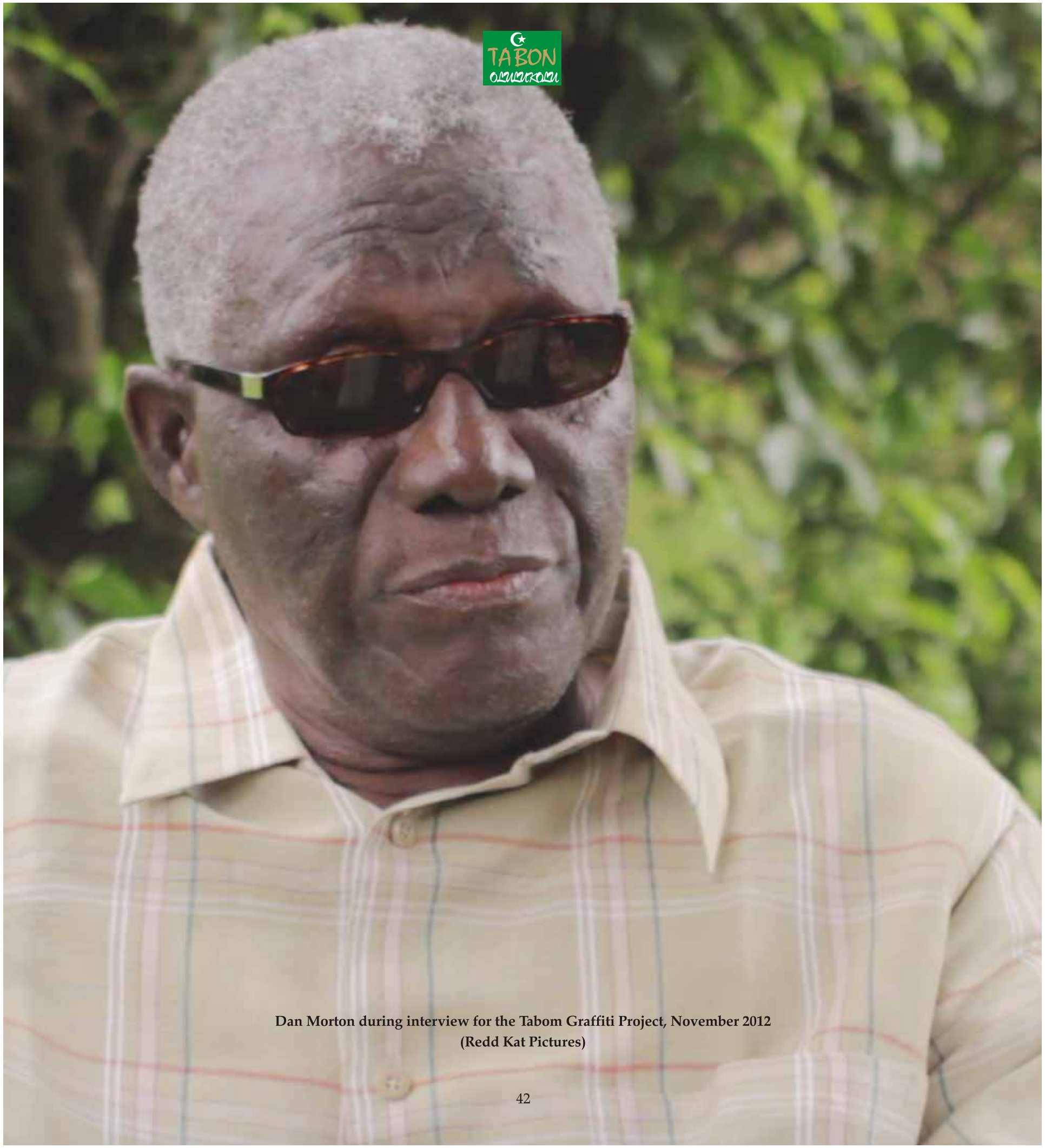
Panel depicting Tabom boxer Azumah Nelson, Brazil House, November 2012
(Redd Kat Pictures)



Azumah Nelson, being welcomed back by the
Under Secretary for Youth and Sports, Sam Nelson (on the right)
from his WBC World Featherweight victory in Puerto Rico, over Wilfredo Gomez.
December, 1984
(Public Records and Archives Administration Department, Government of Ghana)

So the Tabom people have been of use to Ghanaians, to Ghana and Brazil in all areas of life. In education we have some success. Mr. Sam Nelson[14] became the Deputy Minister. We have the boxer Nii Azuma [Nelson[15]], that's Prof. Azuma. For ten good years he was the world champion. We have eminent doctors like Dr. T. A. Morton[16], the special physician of the first president of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, and we have a host of personalities. We have helped to make Accra or the Ga state what it is.

Even now, they have a very magnificent building called Awo Gbeke House. That is where Dan Morton had his office. He has the tailoring shop, he has a laundry attached to it, he has the material shop. If you want to have a suit, just walk into the building and you can have your material and you can send it to the tailoring section.



Dan Morton during interview for the Tabom Graffiti Project, November 2012
(Redd Kat Pictures)

Dan Morton
the Making of a Tailor

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012**

You are a recognized Ghanaian and a recognized member of the Tabom community because of your work. It's historic. Can you tell us how you got your start?

Dan Morton: I became a tailor through a dream from my grandma. There was a time when I was going to school and she wanted to give me an outfit. So she looked for a tailor from Adabraka to the [Accra] General Post Office, [which is] about half of a mile [of distance], but she did not see any tailor around. So she said: "when you grow up, I'll let you be a tailor because I'm surprised that we don't see any tailor around" . . . So when I finished school, she had a dream that I should be a tailor. And so she told me: "I'm sending you to your grandfather, who is my brother, to teach you the tailoring." So I said "no, I'm not prepared for that." She said "you have to, because it was a dream." So, she sent me to my grandfather to go and stay with him. Here is somebody who is staying with his parents and now going to a different house altogether. It wasn't easy because I had to go under so many things: serving as a boy in the kitchen, sweeping, doing everything.

[My grandfather was] a contractor tailor. He made uniforms for other people. So I ran away and went back to my grandmother. She sent me back, I came back again and she sent me back. So the third time when I came back, she ceased to [send me], but the relationship between my grandmother and myself [suffered]. So I said, well, this is a grandmother who loves me so much . . . then I said "I have to go back." After three months I started sowing things for myself. Then after working for two years, I realized that the type of tailoring that my grandfather was doing was not the tailoring [that specializes in making] suits, [but instead] he was making uniforms. So at one time, he sent me to buy buttons from a Lebanese shop. When I went, I saw a classmate of mine, a Lebanese guy. He was also doing the tailoring. So I asked him, whether they will accept me there and he said "why not?" So when I went, they accepted me and within six months [at the Lebanese tailor shop] I was able to grab (learn) everything, [to the point that] I could sew a suit [on my own].

In December 1942 a friend came to tell me that he was going to American Line for a job. At that time there was a war going on and the Americans were here [in Ghana] so he said, "come and assist me. I'm going to look for a job" . . . I listened to him, he put me on his bicycle and we went . . . he didn't get the job but I did.

When I started working, the soldiers were coming in greater numbers . . . so they decided to open a whole tailoring shop. So they employed three more tailors in addition to me. So I became the head of the department and I worked there for almost four years. When the war finished, they left. So I went back and opened a small shop in my grandmother's house on a small veranda and started getting the work one by one until an old friend of mine told me that he has got a shop in Adabraka so I must come and take it, so I went and took the shop . . . So I started working, things were moving fine, I was getting jobs and then it appeared in the papers that they were looking for artisans to be trained overseas . . . A cousin of mine . . . told me "this is a chance for you. Apply." I put in an application and a reply came.


TABON
TAILORS

Then they asked for an aptitude test, I went. A reply came. Then when I realized they are going to test us practically, then I said to myself, "yes, if it is tailoring they are going to try me now [on], I'm a hundred percent sure that I'll be able to go through." So I went and told my grandmother that I'm about to go to overseas. Then she said, "what are you saying?" I said, "I'm about to go to the United Kingdom." She doesn't understand me because she's an old lady. I went to the interview and I passed and [a] letter was written to me saying "you've won a scholarship to go overseas and do tailoring." Then I went and told my grandmother, "I am going overseas." So I went overseas, two years.

Here is somebody who was not [initially] aspiring to be a tailor but through a dream [of his grandmother] is doing tailoring and now going overseas. So really when I went, I opened my eyes, my ears, everything. I studied tailoring properly. So when we finished the examination I had a first class [grade] in tailoring. Two years later we came back. Fortunately for me when I came, the government gave us a loan to establish ourselves [in the tailoring business]. This is how I started. After working for 10 years, I went back overseas (to the UK) again on my own to study certain things which I lacked in the tailoring. So when I was there it came to me, I don't know if it's in a dream or whatever it is, that there is plenty of money in our country. We don't see it, but when strangers (foreigners) come they see our money . . . and they pick it out. So then my brain opened right there. Then I said to myself "open up a shop yourself" as I saw in the UK. So when I returned I went to take a very big shop in Kwame Nkrumah Avenue. Very big one. And I made it beautifully.

Only few people know that Dan Morton was the person making the suits for Kwame Nkrumah. In fact he loved me. Every Sunday he would send his car to pick me up, sit and chat with him [about political matters].

Interviewer

This idea of Tabom pride over their tailoring skills, is it in the blood?

Dan Morton: Yes, I have trained more than fifty tailors in this country. They are all working fine because they (our Tabom ancestors) brought tailoring not from anywhere, but from Brazil. That's the inspiration that I have that has made me what I am. And I will say, we have the finest tailoring shop in this country. Nobody has a fine shop as we do. So, it's the Tabom blood that is working. And if you don't know, people always say Tabom people are rich people because they are hardworking people. They are not interested in somebody else's business. They are interested in themselves. They are able to do things for themselves and the majority of us are artisans. It is now unfortunate that our young men are going into academic areas. But too much of academic [work] doesn't build a nation. It is people working in technical trades that build a nation like this people here [in the Scissors House].



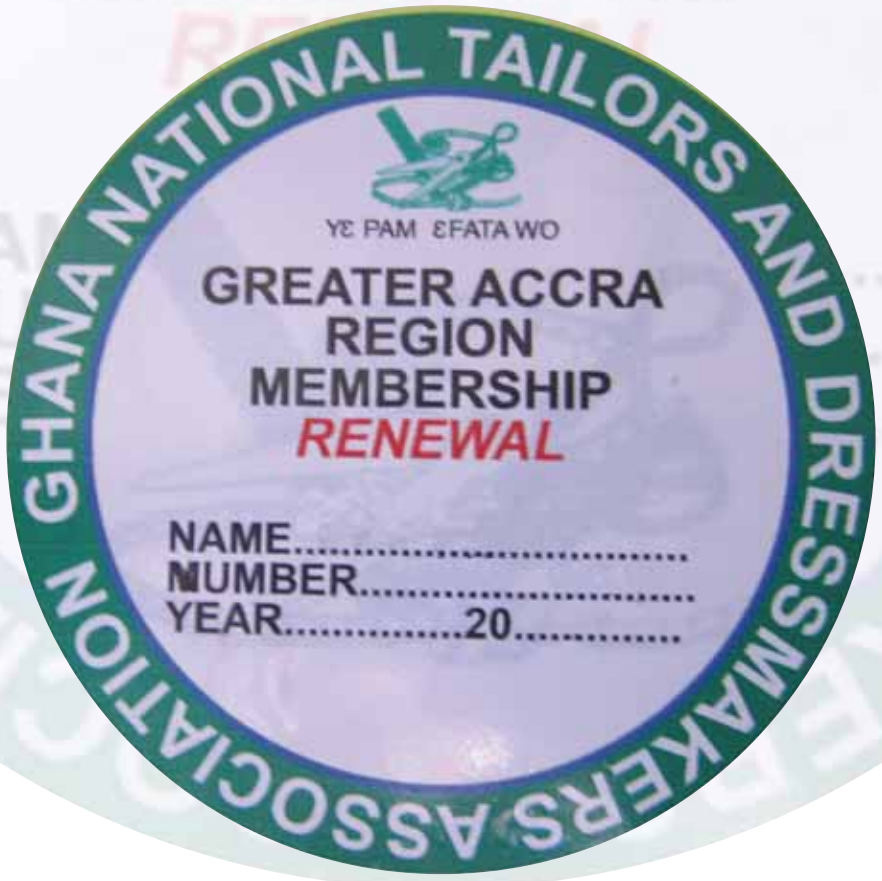
Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum
High Street, Accra.

[Unfortunately] in this country if you are a tailor, a shoemaker, a nurse, you are a nobody. In other countries they look at them properly. I was in England recently and the person who took me to the airport was riding a very big car, a beautiful one. What does he do? He is a security man. Here, you can only see [those kinds of cars in the hands of] managing directors. Big, big people. You can never see a carpenter, a mason, a tailor driving this, which means we don't look after them very well. But there, their eyes are open. They pay them well so that you can do what you want. Anyway I don't belong to that class. I'm a middle person, period.

Interviewer

What was your role in organizing the tailor business in Ghana?

Dan Morton: I was the one who organized the Ghana Tailors and Dressmakers Association. It has spread over the country now. We have the big men, we have the big office, and I was the one [in charge]. I became the president [of the association] for fifteen good years, and they didn't want me to leave but I still resigned. We have a proverb in Ga language, "when water stays too long in the pot, it stinks." When you stay too long in a particular place, you stink. People don't want to smell you again. That's how we should live in this country. We should be free [to do what we want].



"Shango makes Tabom people proud.
No Shango, no Tabom"
(Eric Morton, April 2016)



Panel depicting Shango at Brazil House, November 2012 (Source: Redd Kat Pictures)

Chapter 3
"Our Religion and Beliefs"

Various authors have documented that many of the Tabom who first arrived to Ghana were practicing Muslims and that they were the ones who first introduced Islam in Southern Ghana (Amos and Ayesu 2002, Schaumloeffel 2008, Essien 2010). Names of returnees such as Mahama Sokoto and Mahama Haruna confirm that connection. Many Tabom also claim that their ancestors brought Shango from Bahia with them. Yes, Shango, the thunder god of the Yoruba! Shango, who is said to have offered protection and fortune to those who brought him and continued worshipping him, still accompanies some Tabom today after a long journey of loss and reencounter. In fact, the returnees not only brought Shango to Accra - Luis Nicolau Parés and Lisa Castillo (2015) documented the case of a shrine for Shango in Ouidah (Benin) that was founded by Bahian returnee José Pedro Autran and also possibly by his wife and associates.

With time the practice of Islam decreased among members of the community in favor of Christianity. Most Tabom today are Methodists, Anglicans or Presbyterians. But, like in the case of most people, spirituality among the Tabom is complex. Elaborate funerary celebrations, for instance, mix elements from various religious practices yielding a unique mix.

Among the Ga people in Accra most residential compounds are associated with family ancestors who eventually become deified. In addition to offering spiritual and ancestral connections, these deities also serve as identity markers. As part of the Ga, the Tabom embrace this tradition of ancestor worship and many of those who arrived from Brazil are remembered in ceremonies and prayers.

The stories in this chapter tease out a complex web of religious, cultural and musical practices and also speak to the history of the community, their aspirations and challenges.

This chapter opens with a transcription of a speech in Ga given at a Tabom funeral ritual in Accra while pouring libation. This was part of the one week celebration of the passing of Mme. Elizabeth Lekia Nelson at a Tabom family house in the "Russia" neighborhood in Accra on July 8, 2016. As it is customary, libation was poured by Eric Morton, the chief drummer of the Tabom, before music, dance and other rituals began.



Agbe drum and Gin used in the pouring of libation
July 08, 2016
(Nilton Pereira)

Eric Morton: We say Agoo, fathers and mothers!
Everybody: we say Amɛɛ!
Eric Morton: We say Agoo!
Everybody: we say Amɛɛ!

Eric Morton: What day is today? Today is Friday, father's Friday, ancestral Friday. Oooh Carver God! we lift this glass to the heavens but we pour it to the people of the earth. We are at peace when we also drink some.

Oh Tabom people, all elders, from Nmaamnonaa [Street] to the end, Nii Alasha and his people, Nii Pedu and his people, Nii Kwashie and his people. First we call Nii Alasha, to be the first to take this drink. We are mainly here because of you.

Auntie Lekia lays there, the ritual that is performed for Tettey and Tetteh does not die. It has been there from the past, not from my generation.

A plate is broken for every Tabom who dies, then a week after the next Friday that follows we will sprinkle these things as a symbol of our separation from him or her.

So, fathers, bless us. Bless all those who invested their money into this ritual celebration (her burial and funeral rites). Bless all those who took care of her mortuary rites. Bless everyone, and may everyone's wishes come true. Each and everyone's job will be blessed from today which is a Friday. Then you can come and bid Auntie Lekia farewell. So, we pour this libation as children but we are doing what we saw our fathers do.



Picture of Tabom funeral poster, July 2016
(Nathaniel Akwetteh)

Eric Morton: Tswa Omanye aba!

Everybody: Hiao!

Eric Morton: We say Agoo fathers and mothers, ee Olulukolu Amogidiagbo[17].

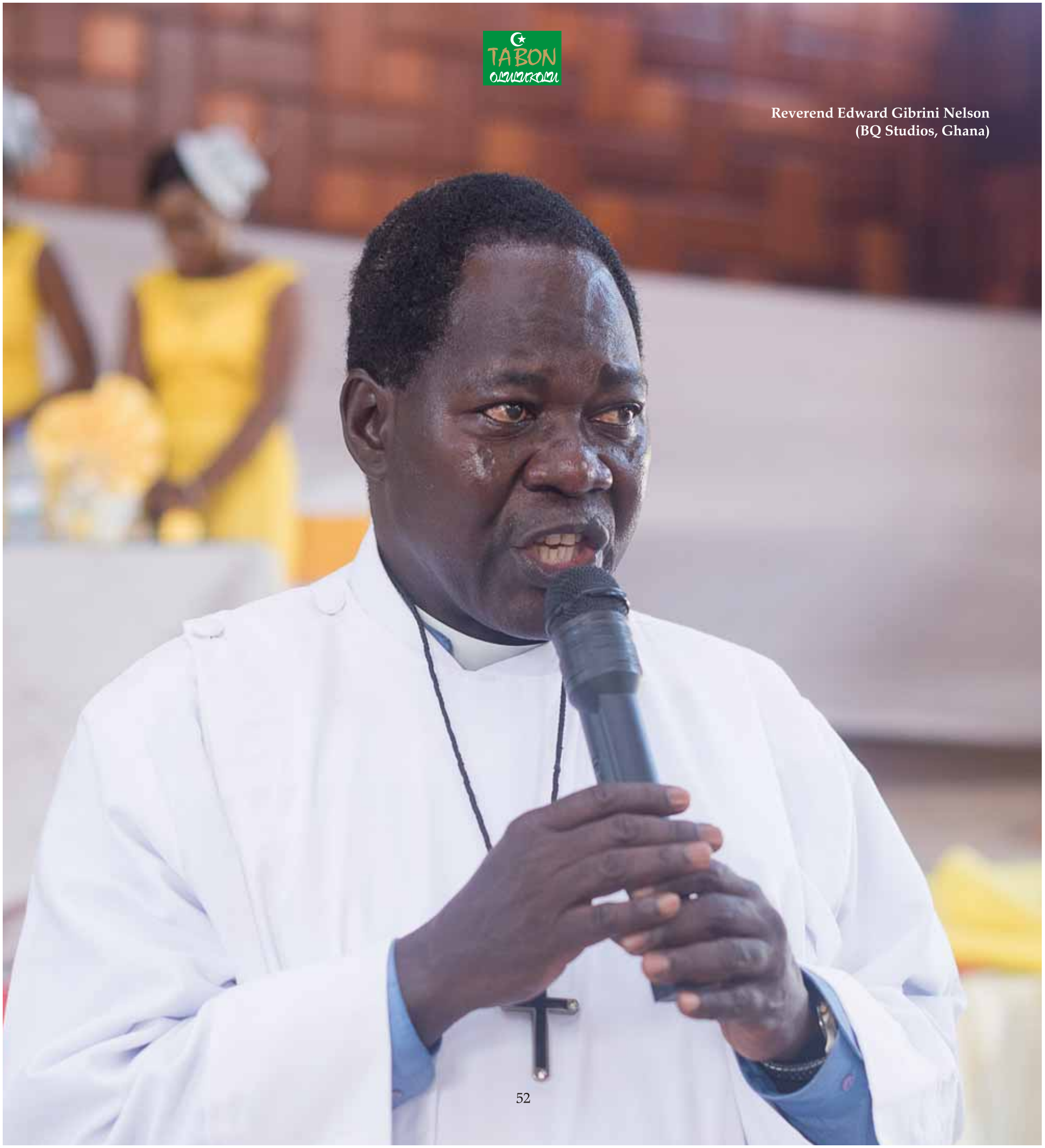
Ei, auntie Lekia, we are seated here because of you. We are performing this ritual for you. Your children and grandchildren and descendants helped to make this a success; we have sprinkled for you today, Friday; we have beautified you, we are going to send you off but because this ritual does not die and since today is a Friday and this is a Tabom ritual, we will eat some of these foods. Let us be blessed and succeed. Olulukolu, Amogidiagbo, Omo Ijesha ee. Shango, may you bless us.

After pouring libation in this occasion, Eric Morton offered the following explanations to the members of the house:

Eric Morton: We will play [agbe music and dance] for a while and then continue with the ritual. Everyone will go and eat the food. You will have to take a little money with you and whatever you see us do there, that is what you will also do.

Requests are made. The food that has been served there (in the enclosed room where the broken plates are) is spiritual and you can make your supplications known there. Nobody knows where his or her glory might come from so when you make your supplications known there, she (the late Lekia Nelson) is not the one to answer them but rather it is God. This is spiritual, we beg you [to take it seriously and act accordingly].

All men should come [first]. Everyone should remove his sleepers [before entering the room where the broken plates are]. After, women will do the same.



Reverend Edward Gibrini Nelson
(BQ Studios, Ghana)



One week funeral celebration of the Tabom, Russia, Accra, July 8, 2016 (Nilton Pereira)

Interviewer **Juan Diego Diaz, February 2016**
What religion do the Tabom practice?

Eric Morton: The Taboms brought the Islamic religion to Ghana when they came but some of them are also Christians. Some Taboms were Hausa while others were Yoruba. This religion [Yoruba religion] is far from [that of] Christians, Yorubas and Hausas but we all live together.

Interviewer
Is your family Christian?

Edwin Brown: We are Christians but we also participate in the annual traditional celebrations of our people—the Tabom and the Ga. There are times [when] we visit the hospital and the doctor might suggest that the ailment is spiritual rather than physical. In that case, we go to the traditional people for the solution but this does not mean we are not [good] Christians . . .



Xangô. The fourth king of the Oyo Kingdom
the black god of lightning and thunder,
it has “amala” (okra) as the food offered to him.
Holding its “oxé” (double axe), he masters the powers for justice.
Its fire is burning to destroy cowardice and dishonesty.
Artwork and photography by Ayrson Heraclito, a Brazilian artist from Bahia,
presented at "Incorporations. Afro-Brazilian Contemporary Art",
exhibition held in Brussels, in October 2011.

Most Taboms are affiliated to the Anglican Church and some of their Bishops are Taboms, for instance, Bishop Aruna Nelson[18]. So when I attend [a] church service with my grandmother, I tell her "this a Nelson," then she, in turn, responds "Yeah! This is a Tabom." So it is like the Taboms have some link with the Anglican Church.

Interviewer
Have you heard about Shango?

Edwin Brown: Yes. I think it is a god in Nigeria.

Interviewer
Do you know the Tabom have a Shango?

Edwin Brown: Yeah. I was told that Taboms have some kind of influence from Nigeria and this is evident in their song texts which make use of the Yoruba language. I am sure maybe it might not be only Shango, but there might be other [Yoruba] gods but the Taboms may have chosen to stick with one—Shango.

Interviewer **Natheniel Akwetteh, August 2016, in Ga**
Who is Shango?

Eric Morton: Shango is a deity from abroad. Our grandfathers brought it. Nii Alasha[19] brought it from abroad

Interviewer
Where does Shango come from?

Eris Morton: He comes from Brazil but now resides in Accra with us. What I saw about Shango and his house (Candomblé shrines) during my stay in Bahia (he visited Bahia for three weeks in July 2016) proves that Shango is not from here. He is from Bahia, Brazil.



Lekia Nelson dressed as Nii Alasha Nelson during her ceremony of initiation on July 27, 2014 (Ben Amakye-Boateng)

Interviewer

How did he get to Accra?

Eric Morton: He was brought by Nii Alasha. He is a guardian. Nii Alasha brought him from Brazil and he helped the Otublohum section of the Ga during the wars in the past. Shango is therefore a deity of war as well. He is from afar.

Lekia Nelson: Shango is male. It reflects in the way I dress as a priestess.

Eric Morton: Shango is a male and Lekia is his wife. She is our traditional Shango priestess. She is the one who manages Shango . . . He was brought to Ghana but he disappeared and now he is back to his home. When he left this house (the Nelson's house in Nmaamnonaa Street), he passed through that door and went through this room (points at a bedroom door in the same house). We got to know this when he (Shango) came back. When Lekia was possessed by Shango on that day (the day of her initiation as Shango's priestess on July 27, 2014), Shango showed us [through her] how he disappeared (Eric Morton shows a picture of Lekia Nelson moving on the floor like a snake on the day of her initiation as she re-enacted how Shango disappeared). Shango likes apple, incense and Florida Water. He detests blood and filth.

Interviewer

Do you perform some rituals for Shango periodically?

Lekia Nelson: Yes. I perform rituals for him on Fridays because that is his day. After performing the rituals, my father (Eric Morton) comes here early in the morning to continue with the ritual.

Interviewer

How do you communicate with him?

Lekia Nelson: I pour libation for him on Fridays at midnight. Then my father (Eric Morton) comes to continue with the libation in the morning.



Eric Morton and the Shango Priestess, Lekia Nelson, Accra, 2016 (Nilton Pereira)

Eric Morton: When people want to hear advice from Shango, or ask for protection or hear him speak, they go to the priestess and bring the things that he [Shango] likes: Florida Water, gold, wine (non alcoholic), gin for libation and apple. He does not like [the color] black. She (Lekia) is the only one authorized to do this. Shango is looked after by her (Lekia). He is in a space in the corner of her house.

Interviewer
What do you ask him during the libation?

Lekia Nelson: I ask him to assist us all. Sickness should be taken afar because we seek health, grace and [having a decent] job. People should benefit from their work so they can have peace and contribute to whatever will be done in happiness. This is what I ask Shango.

Interviewer
In what language does he speak to you?

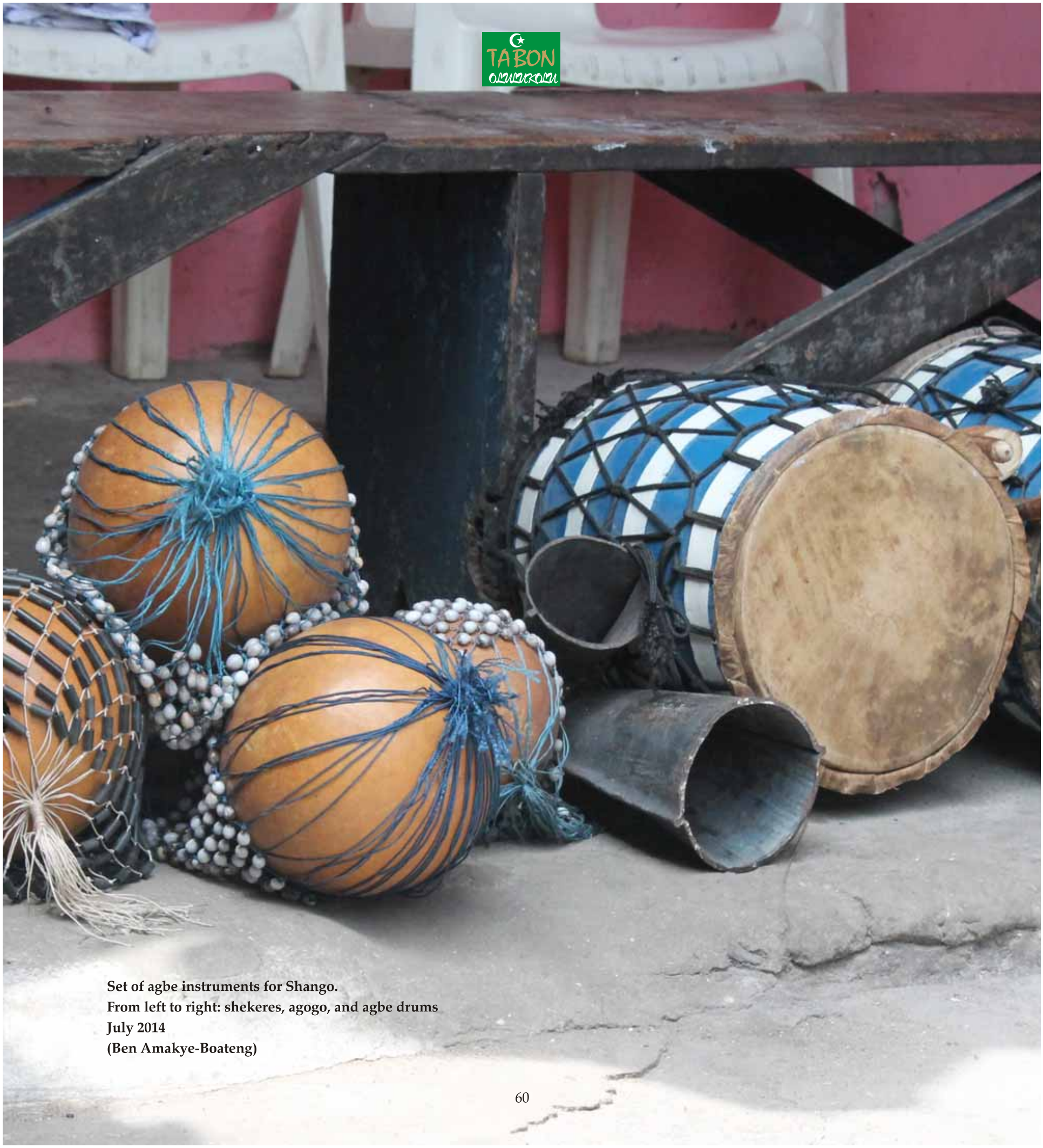
Lekia Nelson: In English.

Interviewer
What does Shango do for the Tabom people?

Eric Morton: Shango protects us. He protects all of us: children, grandchildren and everyone who is a Tabom. In times of difficulty or challenges, you will see results if you approach Shango . . . You can ask Shango anything you want at the Shango shrine. The Shango priestess [will respond] in English when she is possessed by the deity.

Interviewer
Can people who go to church or the mosque also worship Shango?

Lekia Nelson: Everyone can worship Shango. Your religion does not hinder you from approaching Shango. Anyone can come to him with their troubles and once libation is poured, you will have relief. That is why Shango is here.



Set of agbe instruments for Shango.
From left to right: shekeres, agogo, and agbe drums
July 2014
(Ben Amakye-Boateng)

Interviewer

Does Shango like agbe music?

Lekia Nelson: Yes, he really likes agbe because for him, that is his music. He does not delight in any music apart from agbe. You will see him the moment you begin to play agbe music. They came to play agbe when I was taken to the training grounds (in Christmas 2010) and later when a ceremony was organized for me. And even when I was finally brought to Accra (July 2014), they came to play the agbe music to usher me home. When there is a performance and agbe music is played, the entire performance gets to a different level because no one understands his (Shango's) music.

Interviewer

What agbe songs does Shango like the most?

Lekia Nelson: He likes all agbe songs. Any agbe song. All the songs are his so he likes all of them. He does not have a favorite song.

Interviewer **Juan Diego Diaz, July 2016**

Does Shango like agbe music?

Eric Morton: Yeah. Every agbe song is for Shango and he likes it. Every sound. There is an entire agbe ensemble (a set of drums) in the house of the Shango lady (priestess) [exclusively dedicated to Shango].

Interviewer **Ben Amakye-Boateng, July 27, 2014, in Ga**

Continuation of a question about Tabom history.



Eric Morton at the Candomble house Ilê Axé Icimimó Agunjú Didê in Cachoeira, Bahia, July 2016 (Nilton Pereira)

This people (the Tabom) attended church but they still worshipped Shango. They were fulfilled. They were wealthy. Shango was the one responsible for their wealth. They were wealthy and that is why they worshipped Shango. They worshipped the [divinity] well. You would see Reverend Ministers there when it was time [for rituals]. You would see leaders. Rituals were performed for them. They set a table and ate. And drank whisky too.

That's how Shango got to the Quarcoopome family. Despite the fact that Shango was in the possession of the Quarcoopome family, he kept coming back to the [Tabom] house. He possessed a lady in Amusudai and she couldn't go to work. He possessed another person in Adabraka.

This person (refers to Lekia Nelson the Shango priestess), who is a . . . [descendant] of Nii Alasha, when she got possessed, she behaved like a mad woman. She refused to accept her fate. She went to church and was sacked. She went to the mosque and was sacked too. Whenever she appeared, she was told that "the mallam (a Muslim spiritualist, herbalist and diviner) you consulted is too great." The Apostolic (Christian Apostolic Church) woman in our house, as soon as she saw her she began to sing her praises, "Olulukolu, olulukolu, olulukolu amogidiagbo, omo Ijesha, omolonkpe." She said "go and rest, go and rest." And she began to cry. So this (Shango) is not a fetish thing. I am a practicing Muslim, but I still hold on to it (the cult of Shango).

Lekia Nelson Sr. (Aunt of the Shango Priestess): I'm a leader [in the Methodist Church] and I also hold on to it (worship Shango). I won't abandon it.

Naa Riza Nelson: One of my daughters went to Ada. She was pregnant and her stomach was very big but the baby wasn't coming out. And they said they wanted to sacrifice [the baby] for a deity that they had [recently] acquired for fishing. Do you know what Shango did? He transformed [himself] into a long gigantic creature. Nobody could tell its length and its legs as he stood in their pot. And the people of the household - the one in charge of their deity, fell down. He uttered in their language, "what is this? We have never seen anything like this. What a misfortune, what a misfortune! Eii!" Then a person came from another house and ordered my daughter's release.

Lekia Nelson

the Making of a Shango Priestess



Lekia Nelson on the day of her initiation as Shango Priestess, July 27, 2014
(Ben Amakye-Boateng)

Interviewer **Natheniel Akwetteh, August 2016, in Ga**

What is your religion?

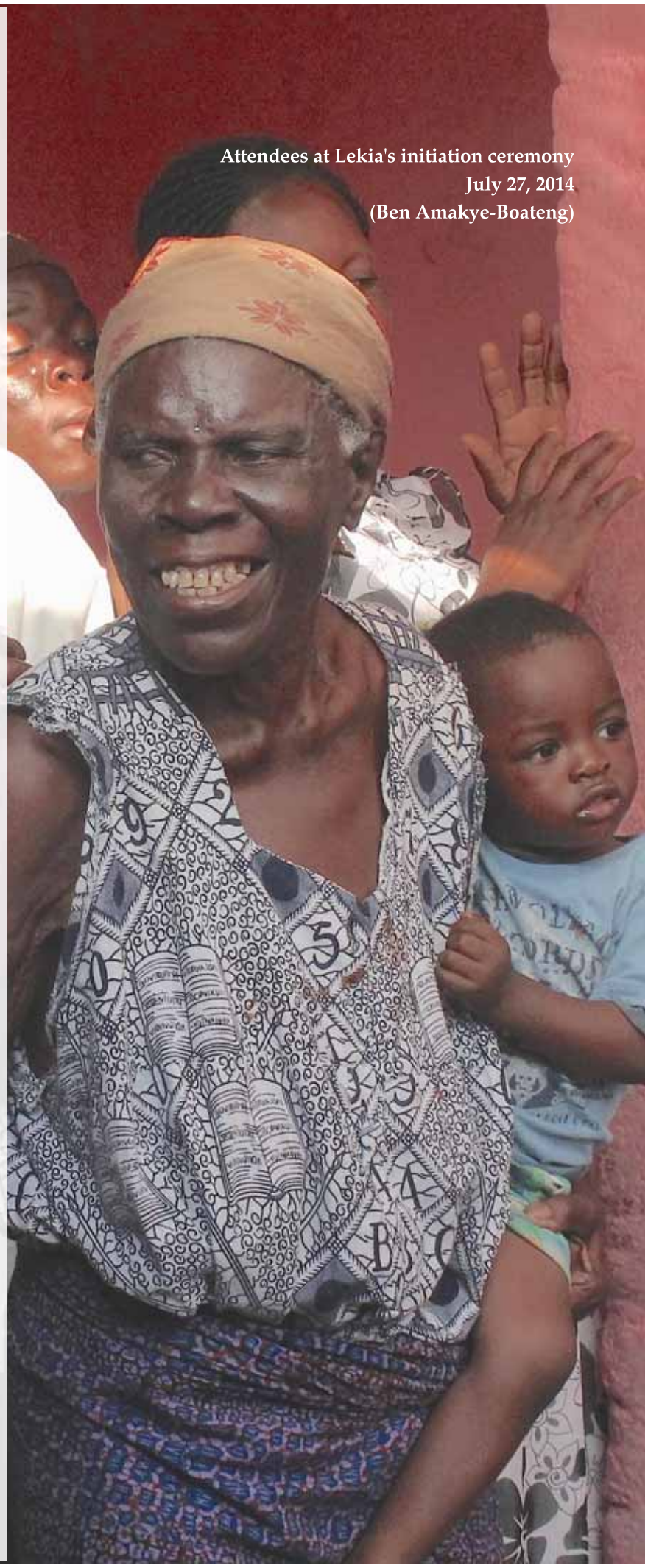
Lekia Nelson: I was a Muslim but now I am with the Old Man (Shango)

Interviewer

How did you receive the call to become the Shango priestess?

Lekia Nelson: When I used to work in the market selling goods, people were not buying my products. So, a prophetess who was passing by one day asked: "Woman, who is standing in front of what you are selling?" I told her "there is no one standing in front of my goods. If someone comes to buy from me, I get up and serve them." But she insisted that someone was standing in front of my selling point. I insisted that there is no one. Then she said "there is a white man standing in front of your goods. He has blocked your goods." Frankly speaking, when I went to sell my goods, I sold nothing and I ended up coming home in tears. So, I usually went to a friend who lives close to the market for her to assist me with my transportation fare. I cried. People did not buy my goods. I have children too so I had to sell in order to help them when my husband was not at home. But I came home without money.

At a certain point, I began to go from my sales point to other places without my knowledge (unconsciously). Sometimes, I found myself in my father's house at Abossey Okai after [I became conscious]. At other times, I found myself sitting at the place of a woman neighbor. [I asked myself] "What is worrying me?" So, my family decided to investigate and they found out that it was the deity of our ancestors that was behind all these worries.



Attendees at Lekia's initiation ceremony
July 27, 2014
(Ben Amakye-Boateng)



Lekia Nelson and her spiritual trainer during Lekia's initiation as Shango Priestess July 27, 2014 (Ben Amakye-Boateng)

Lekia Nelson: How could it be? [The reason is] because I was a Muslim and you would admire me if you saw me in my veil. In fact, at the beginning I did not agree and I lost a lot of things. He (Shango) said that if I did not accept him he would kill my children for me to be left alone. Then when I am alone, I either become insane or what follows would not be something to be spoken of. So I agreed [to become his priestess] and was taken to a village where I saw the details of everything (received my training). My fathers even came there and both, kings and queen mothers, came there too. Everything was made plain for us. The old man (Lekia's uncle) gave me a year to complete my training but I stayed there for three years. It was in the fourth year that I came [back] to Accra. It's been two years now since I came to Accra. I am seeing positive developments in my life since I came. A lot of things have changed in my life. So, everything is good.

Interviewer

Who assigned you the period of one year of training? Why one year?

Lekia Nelson: It was Uncle Odiko but now he is deceased. He assigned the one year for my training. In fact, he assigned me six months and the trainer assigned me another six months. That is how the one year came up. But challenges came up there so I spent three years there and came to Accra in the fourth year.

Interviewer

Have you heard of anyone who also received that call from Shango?

Lekia Nelson: No. I have not heard anything like that before. I am the first and only one.

Interviewer

How did you get trained to become Shango's priestess?

Lekia Nelson: For that, our mother (trainer) was there (at the training site). At these kinds of situations, you are assigned to someone for training. You are trained on how to treat and handle a sick person who has been brought to you. You are also trained on handling the traditional medicine that can be administered for the person during his or her bath in order to free them [from their ailments]. You will be taught what leaf to use or administer when a specific ailment is brought to you.



Initiation of Lekia Nelson
by Teacher Awo Donkor
July 27, 2014
(Ben Amakye-Boateng)

Interviewer
Who trained you?

Lekia Nelson: Awo (priestess of the Shango deity) Donkor. She mainly trains mediums who are possessed by white (foreign) deities. She lives at Oku We at Atukpai (Krobotso village at Mayira on the Pokuase road). I am the tenth person she has trained. That is why [some] people [also] call me "Number Ten."

Interviewer
What did you learn there?

Lekia Nelson: I have learned a lot of things. For instance, if a woman is pregnant and she goes beyond the time due for delivery, there are things I can do for her and within a week or two, God will free her. Also, if someone is cursed and he or she is brought to me, I will look into the issue and free that person of the curse.

Interviewer
Did agbe musicians come to help you out at the training center during your training?

Lekia Nelson: They accompanied me on my first day to the place [of training] and came for me after my training was over and I had to return home. They left me after the first rituals had been performed and on the day for me to come home, they came to meet me there . . . amidst agbe dance and music. A lot of people were surprised. They all wondered and asked, "when did this dance reach the level at which it can facilitate the possession of the deity (Shango) in a great-granddaughter of the one who brought it . . . when?" I was sick by then but I was told that the whole place [where the initiation ceremony took place] was crowded. The one who trained me told me that she had trained a lot of people and seen them pass-out but my passing-out was different. So, she was also surprised because although a lot of people have passed-out from her training, I was the first person to attract such a big crowd. More than five cars [full of people] came to the village to accompany me home. But if it was not for this sickness, things would have exploded. So, whatever God does is good.

Interviewer
How was the initiation and who paid for it?

Lekia Nelson: It was my father's sister, that stepped up and payed for everything. Her name is Sarah Lekia Nelson. The initiation was great. Everything was beautiful. During Christmas [of 2010], we went to the place of training and initiation. As I have said, the initiation has to do with being trained to use leaves for medicinal purposes.



Interviewer

When did you exactly begin the training process and when did you finish it?

Lekia Nelson: I finished [my training] and was brought home on July 27, 2014. This means that the training started in year 2010.

Interviewer

Did you start the training immediately after you arrived to Krobotso?

Lekia Nelson: Yes. Once all the necessary rituals are performed after you get there, you would have to sit by the old lady when someone comes to [see] her. You must do this in order to observe how she deals [with different kinds of] issues. You will have to observe whatever she does then, when she needs something, she will ask you to get it for her and further tell you how to do certain things.

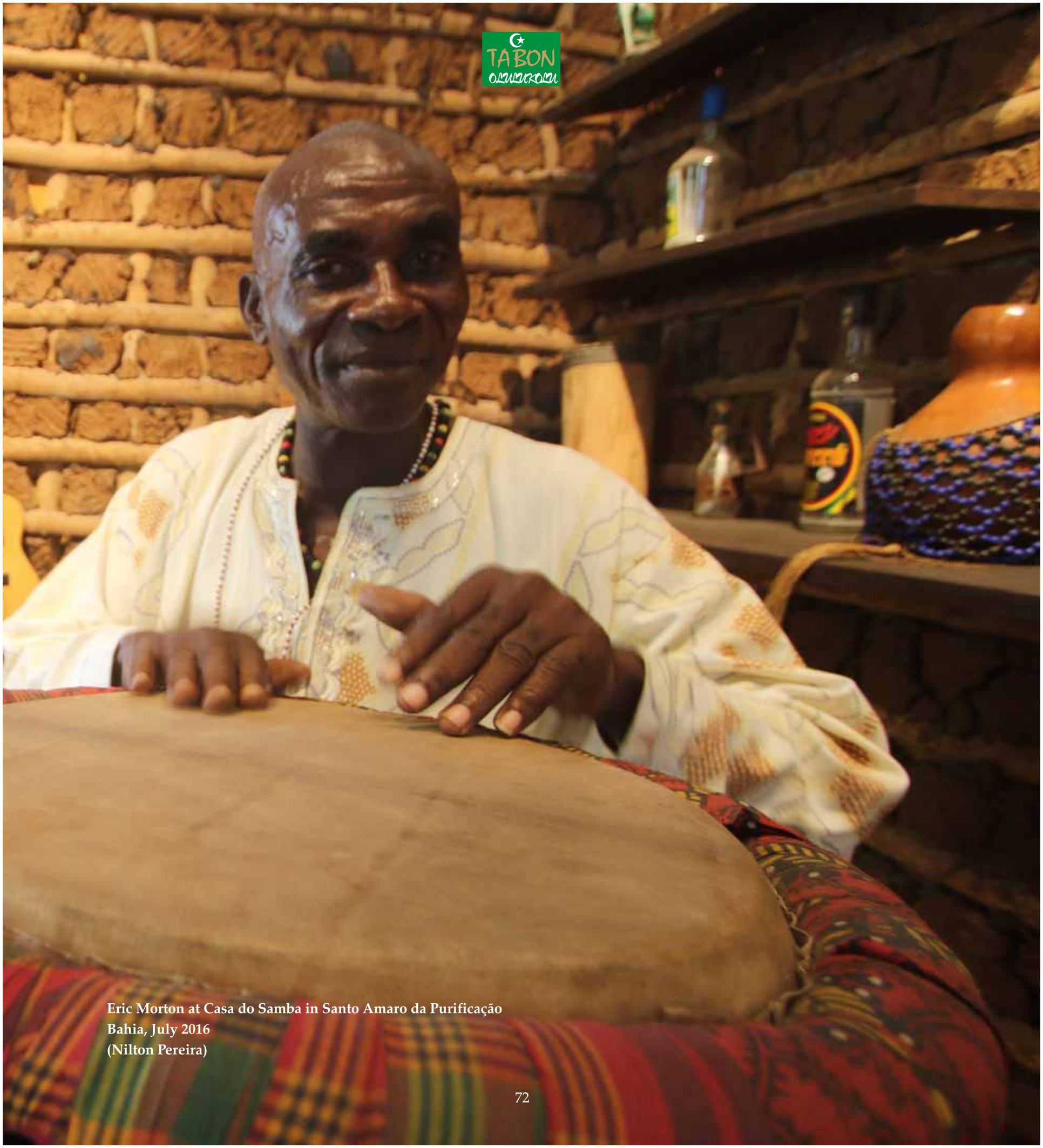
Interviewer

So, how did your trainer know that you were ready to return home and practice on your own?

Lekia Nelson: When the planned period of training is due, the old lady would call your family and tell them that their child has finished everything so they should prepare to come for him or her. It is just like learning a vocation. At the end of the day, you must come home and establish yourself.



Lekia Nelson performing Shango and community observing during her initiation as Shango's Priestess
July 27, 2014
(Ben Amakye-Boateng)



Eric Morton at Casa do Samba in Santo Amaro da Purificação
Bahia, July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)

Chapter 4

Expressive Culture: Music, Dance, Funerals

The Tabom have a distinct musical type called agbe which is used in various contexts including weddings, outdooring ceremonies and especially funerals. It is also used in some ceremonies associated to Shango. Songs in Yoruba language, references to Yoruba deities (like Olorun and Shango), and to places in Nigeria (like Sokoto, Ijesa, Ilesa, or Igbesa) indicate a strong influence of Yoruba culture.

But what does this Yoruba influence have to do with Brazil? We know that Nagô (a version of Yoruba) was lingua franca among Africans and creoles in Bahia by the time the Tabom embarked in their trip of return to West Africa. This was due to a massive arrival of Yoruba speaking people in Bahia during the late 18th century and early 19th century. It is possible that agbe songs reveal linguistic connections between contemporary Taboms and 19th century Bahia. But most Tabom accounts explain this Yoruba influence as a "stopover in Nigeria" by those who returned to Ghana.

Historical records and some stories also suggest that Yoruba influences may be the result of post-arrival trips from Accra to Lagos and a historical presence of Yoruba-speaking people in Accra since the turn of the 20th century (Parker 1995, Essien 2010).

This chapter focuses on agbe, how it is played, what it means, how it is danced and sang, in what contexts it is used, and how musicians believe it was formed. Stories are mainly based on the accounts of Eric Morton, the Tabom master drummer. Some songs are also used as support of the stories.



Fula, cola nut and akara
at One-Week celebration
in Russia Neighborhood, Accra
July 2016
(Nathaniel Akwetteh)

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012, in Ga**

Tell us about traditional Tabom funerals

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: When someone is deceased, we perform traditional rituals that were brought by the Tabom [from Brazil]. Apart from this and the agbe [music], when someone is deceased, on the eve of the wake-keeping, we break a plate and the plate is put in a saucer. This is a symbol of remembrance and separation. He/she is not a part of us any more. So we remember them when we perform the ritual. After this, there is what we call Okudjondjor[20] which we perform after forty days of the remembrance and separation ceremony. Okodjondjor is a forty days ceremony during in which we prepare massa, koose and so on to remember the deceased and his/her departure from our world as he/she has become of the Lord's.

We also prepare fula[21] to remind us of the fact that we were once eating in the same bowl with the person who is now deceased. This is not any medicine, statue or deity, but it is all about peace and love.

Interviewer **Juan Diego Diaz, April 2016**

Is agbe different from that other Ga musical styles?

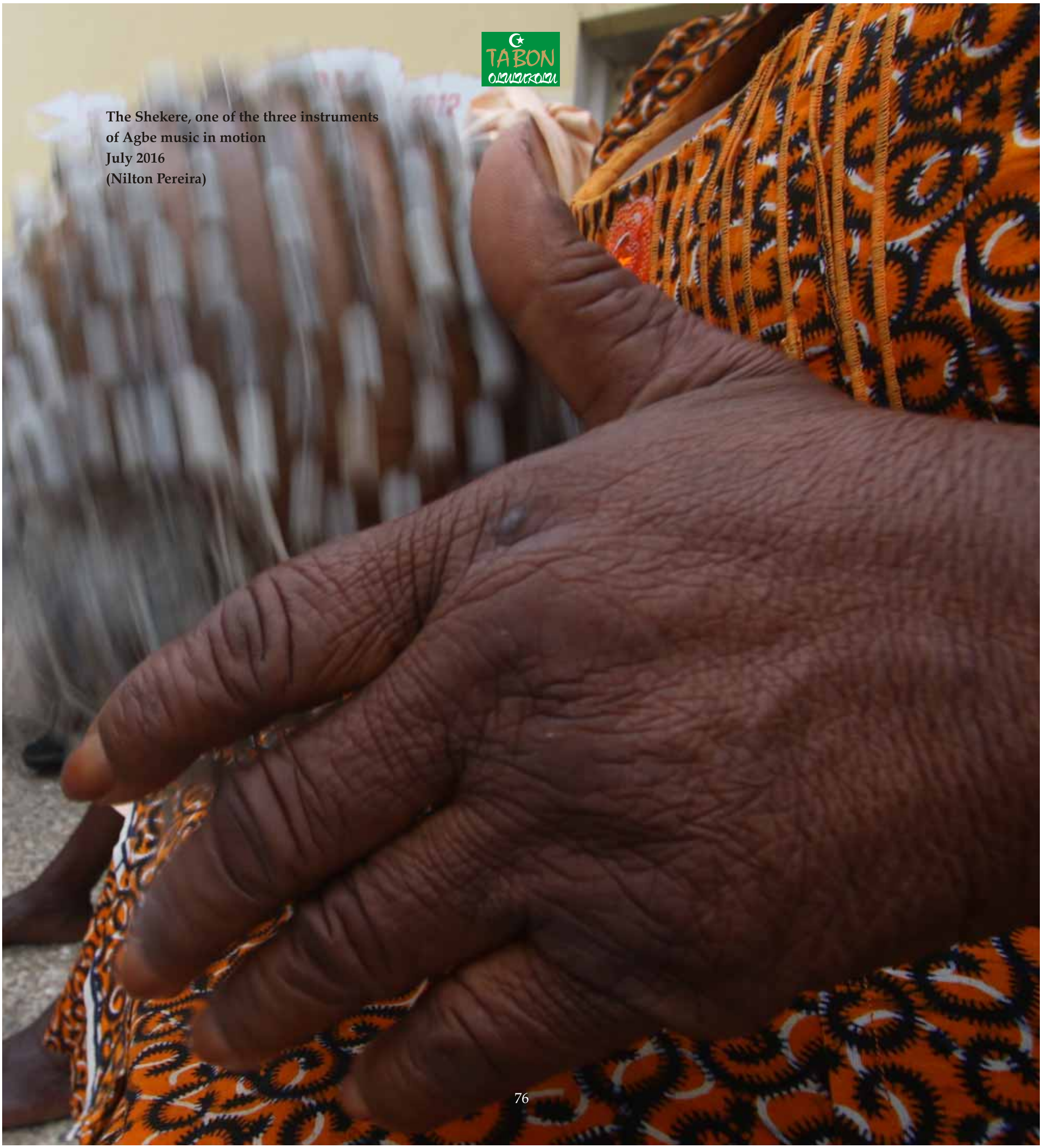
Edwin Brown: It is different. In agbe the song text is really different. They sing and dance and break plates. And they also sing the viva viva. The breaking of the plates signifies a break-up with or separation from the dead person.

Unlike the Ga kpanlogo[22] musical type, agbe music cannot just be randomly performed due to its strong link with the dead and funeral rites of the Tabom. The performance context is very different from kpanlogo because kpanlogo can be performed anytime.

Interviewer

Do you see agbe as a spiritual or recreational musical type?

Edwin Brown: Agbe is a spiritual musical type and most performers see it as a ritual for the dead, as originally. But now it is perceived by many as recreational.



The Shekere, one of the three instruments of Agbe music in motion
July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)

Interviewer
Do the Tabom have their own dancing style? Does it include possession?

Edwin Brown: Yes, they have their own dancing style. But I have never seen someone possessed during agbe performance compared to otu, tigare etc.

Interviewer
What do you see as being unique about agbe?

Edwin Brown: The word "agbe" to me, sounds like a Ga term literally meaning "to kill[23] ." Usually, the song texts are made in Yoruba language and that is what makes agbe unique.

Interviewer
What do you think is Brazilian about agbe?

Edwin Brown: I think the music of agbe is like something from another world, like from the Caribbean in a way. Also, the names of the agbe instruments do project some kind of Caribbean influence. For instance, they call the bell, agogo and the rattle, shekere. The dance movements are also different. Usually, we look at the bell patterns or timeline. The viva viva timeline is the same as the timeline of the kpatsa musical type of the Ga-Adangbe. The only difference might be the tempo because kpatsa begins with a slow tempo. However, [the] viva viva [groove and songs] tend to express some kind of sad emotion.

Interviewer **Juan Diego Diaz, February 2016**
Why do you think agbe music is important for the Tabom people?

Eric Morton: Yeah, because they brought the music from Ijesha[24] . . .



The Agogo, one of the
three instruments
of Agbe music
July 2016
(Ben Amakye-Boateng)

Soloist: Dabi m'beru agbe, kim be wa jo Choir: Yee! dabi m'beru agbe, kim be wa jo eee Soloist: eba m'beru Ijesha koni gbagbe Choir: Yee! dabi m'beru agbe, kim be wa jo eee	"We have started playing the agbe dance So, we invite you to come and dance ask in Ijesha and you won't forget that that is where the dance came from"

Agbe song about the origins of agbe. Song in Yoruba with phonetic transcription.
Translation and transcription by Mr. Salomon Armah, Accra, September, 2016

The music is very important for them (the Tabom). They used to engage themselves in music competitions in the past and they always won as a result of the agbe. Several musical types like obonu and adowa (two Akan musical styles) were played at these competitions by different cultural troupes but agbe music turns out to be superior. These competitions happened in the early 1960s. I was very young at that time.

Interviewer
Do you think most of the Tabom know the agbe songs or just some of them?

Eric Morton: Yeah, some Tabom people know the songs. [But] it is not every Tabom who knows the agbe songs. At [our] Okudjondjor [ceremonies], you would realize that the old ladies together with many others [are the ones who can] sing the songs . . . Those who do not learn them (the agbe songs) would not be able to sing them because the text of the music is not [in] Ga rather, it is [in] Yoruba.

Interviewer
If the songs are in Yoruba, do you think the Tabom people understand the meaning of the songs?

Eric Morton: Some people know the meaning of the songs because they learn them. It is not everyone who knows or understands the meaning of the agbe songs.

Interviewer **Juan Diego Diaz, November 2015**
What is Brazilian about agbe?

Eric Morton: The viva viva


TABON
1836



Tabom elders Memmuna Coffie, Mary Akweley Koshie Lamptey, and Love Blankson dancing Viva Viva at Brazil House, July 2016 (Nilton Pereira)



Auntie Memmuna Coffie dancing Agbe
at Residence of Brazilian Ambassador, Accra
July 2016
(Gerard Nartey)

Interviewer
What is the viva viva?

Eric Morton: Viva viva is for Shango. It is [done] at the wake keeping [ceremony] to send the spirit [of the deceased person] to Brazil. The ladies dance. We break plates and eat kose, fula, massa, akara and cola nut.

Interviewer
Why to Brazil?

Eric Morton: Because this is where Nii Alasha [and the other returnees] came from.

Interviewer
It is then a type of farewell

Eric Morton: Yeah. It is sion! (an expression used by the Tabom to say good bye). (He sings some songs typically heard at the viva viva).

Viva viva viva viva viva viva viva ia . . .

Temi le she leoo, temi le she leoo
temi le she leoo, temi le she leoo . . .

Aya zenabu kelo
Ea! . . .

Aya buko e buko aya cosha e
Aya buko e, aya cosha e . . .
Aya buko e, aya cosha e . . .

Siooon! Good bye!

Eric Morton

the Making of a Master Drummer (Agbetse)

Mr. Eric Odarkwei Morton currently holds the stool of master drummer among the Tabom and as such is referred to as agbetse (literally, the father of agbe) or Nii Kwashie II (the stool name of the master drummer). He is the second individual in the community to hold this position (the first one being Pedro Nelson, also known as Nii Kwashie I). After thirteen years as interim agbe chief, Eric Morton was officially installed in February of 2000, the same day of Nii Azumah V's coronation. The master drummer has a central role in the community as he oversees funeral rites, ceremonies related to Shango and other social gatherings.

Eric Morton at Brazil House
July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)

Interviewer **Juan Diego Diaz and Natheniel Akwetteh, July 2016, in Ga**

At what age did you begin playing agbe?

Eric Morton: I was 17 years when I started playing agbe music. When I was a young boy, I studied how to play agbe and played with the Tabom elders. I remember how young I was in the year 1973 as a student in Form 3 (third year of Junior Secondary school in the Ghanaian educational system). I was chosen to go and play [agbe] for the Otublohum Odwira[25] . Since then, it has been 43 years now. At that time, we played the Odwira with the Otublohum people from the Hausa cemetery through the entire Ga town to the Brazil Lane . . . That was the first Odwira played by the people of Otublohum in the year 1973.

Interviewer

Who taught you agbe?

Eric Morton: It was our [drum] chief, J. H. Kommey, who taught me the agbe at Nmaamnonaa [street in Accra]. He was the [unofficial] agbe chief in those days (the 1970s and 80s) and I took over from him when he left (he passed away in 1987). He taught me the drumming (but not the songs). I am now 61 years old and the chief of agbe music. I am the best agbe player so far and a teacher because it's been 43 years now since I started playing. I have two apprentices with me here now (Albert Lamptey and David Djarbeng aka Junior).

Interviewer **Juan Diego Diaz, February 2016**

Who taught you the songs?

Eric Morton: I have brothers [who speak] in Yoruba and they are the ones who taught me the songs (Eric Morton's junior brother Salomon Armah lived in Lagos for 21 years and is fluent in Yoruba). I also learned from the old [Tabom] ladies who sing agbe.

Interviewer

Why is music so important for you?

Eric Morton: Yes, I like it . . . I am very interested in music and that is why I learned it. I started learning the Yoruba songs . . . and agbe all together in 1973.



Eric Morton and apprentices David Djarbeng and Albert Lamptey, Brazil House, July 2016 (Nilton Pereira)



The Agbetse and his apprentices, Brazil House, July 2016 (Nilton Pereira)

Interviewer

Do you think the younger generations of Tabom are interested in agbe music?

Eric Morton: Yeah, at least I have some young men I am teaching. I teach them how to play the drums and everything.

Interviewer

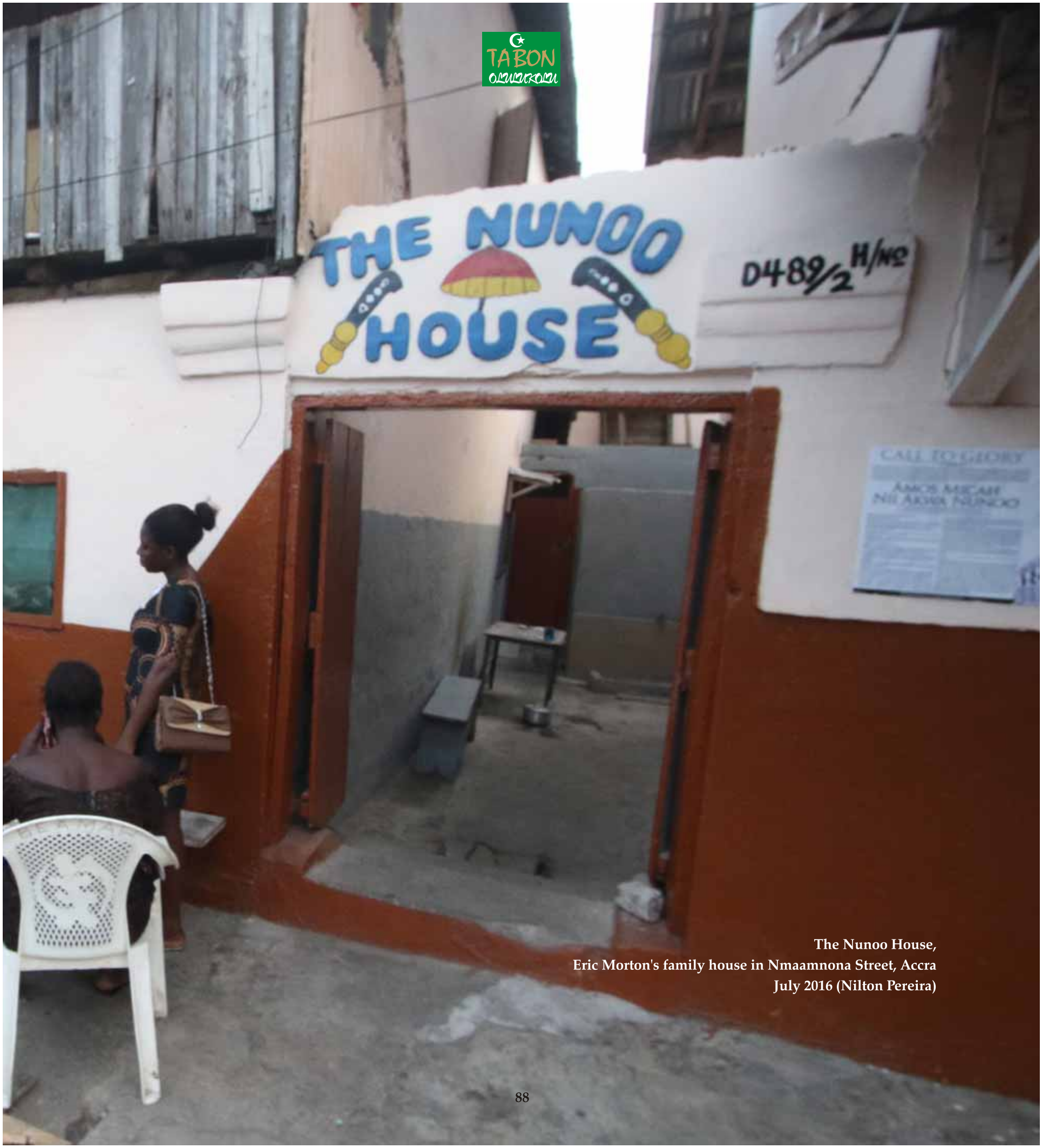
So do you think the younger generation of Tabom would be able to carry on with the tradition, or the tradition could die out?

Eric Morton: No, no. It won't die out. They will continue the tradition.

Interviewer

So you think it is important that the tradition continues.

Eric Morton: Yes because it was handed over to us in the olden days.



The Nunoo House,
Eric Morton's family house in Nmaamnona Street, Accra
July 2016 (Nilton Pereira)

Eric's Monologue in Salvador, Bahia (July 2016)

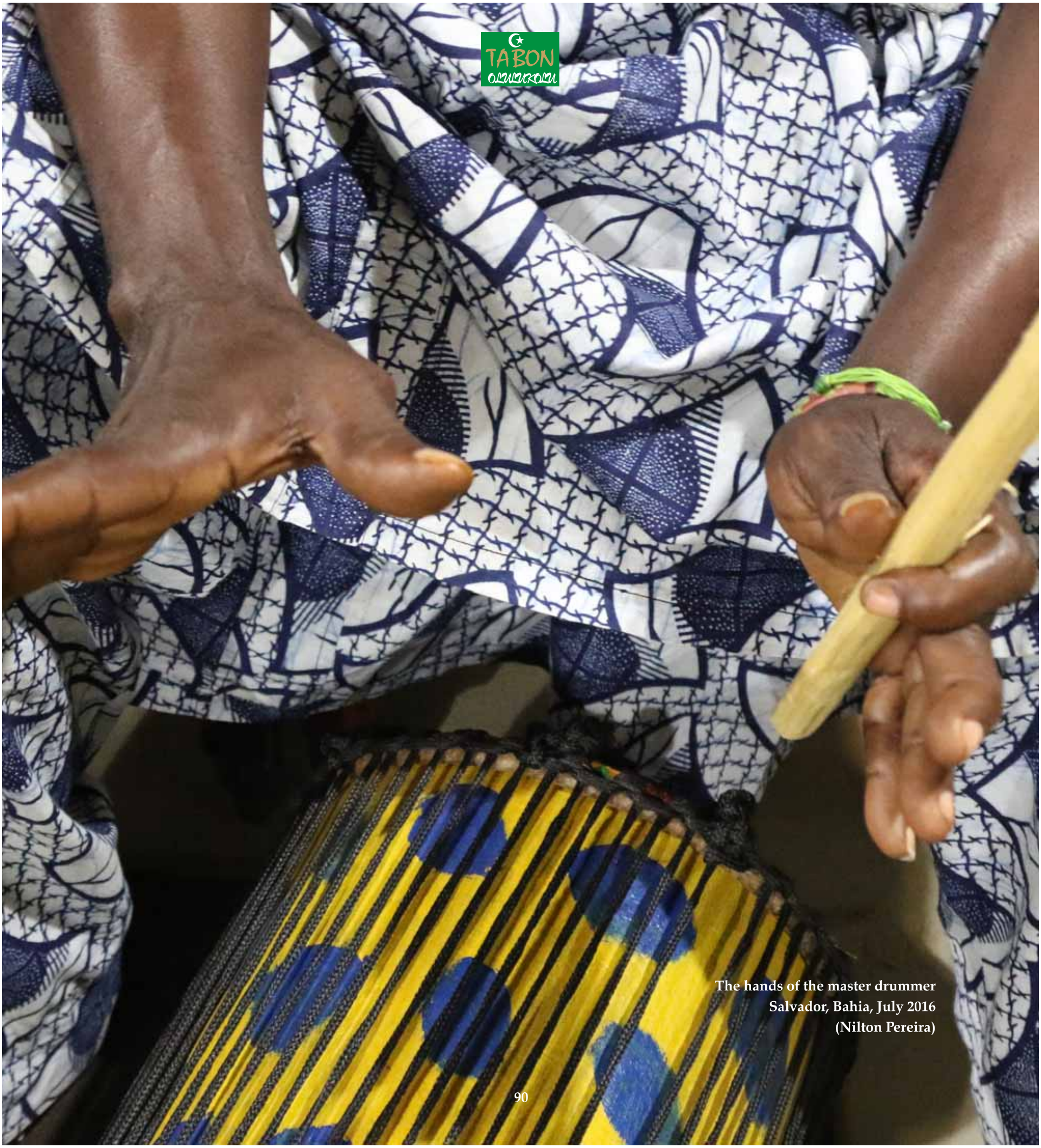
I started playing agbe by first playing the bell, during the time of Nii Amuzu, who played for [J. H.] Kommey's father, Frotozo, Pedulash, Pedubada, King Joe, Uncle Odiko, Uncle Kpakpo Nuus, Ataa Oko, Uncle Charles, Uncle Aryee and the elders I came to meet at Nmaamnonaa [street]. Essel, Ataa Asa, and Ataa Akpa Marbel. I lived with them in the house at Nmaamnonaa [street] and I have never spoken rudely to any of them.

Our [community] mother [is] Naa Lamley, her sister Kuuwa and her elder brother Zamani Ashirifie and Ataafio Nunoo. I did not come to meet Zamani my grandfather but I met Ataafio Nunoo. I did not also come to meet Ahene but I met Naa Lamle, Kuuwa and Abojwe. I came to meet most of the elders in Nmaamnonaa [street].

I humbled myself when I was learning agbe. During those days when J. H. [Kommey] was playing agbe, it got to a time when Tetteh, Kwei La and myself [were] the [only] ones who played. It [was] Aakwei who inform[ed] me whenever agbe was requested to be performed at a function. He told me where to go and we complied. We brought home what we earned in the show however, we did not demand [too much] money . . . for the agbe performance because they were our fathers or elders. Death is not something to pride in (death is not something to be used as an opportunity to make money).

Eric Morton in Cachoeira
Bahia, July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)





The hands of the master drummer
Salvador, Bahia, July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)

Tetteh died unexpectedly and left me alone. But I held onto the Tabom agbe day and night. I left my job for it and no one works harder than me in keeping agbe alive in all of Zongo Lane, Accra. I also introduced them (people at Zongo Lane) to the use of good materials for painting [houses] . . .

[In one occasion] I went to play agbe at Aburi [while I was doing a painting job]. The people I left behind could not complete the job by the time I arrived. When people (those who contracted us) asked about me, [my fellow workers] said that I had gone to play agbe. [At another occasion] Seidu (a patron) had a job for me but this is what they told him: "Oh! Do not assign it to him because he will leave the work to go and play agbe, and he will go to bed the moment he eats."

But I stand here today as one who humbled himself for the Tabom agbe. I have played agbe very well. I was [a student] in Form 3 when I started playing agbe for the King of Otublohum, Mantse Addo Ankrah. Nii Azumah IV was alive by then.

It was during the time of [Nii Shippi] Gangidi, Asafoiatse Oduro Oduro, Shippi, Asafoianye, and Manye Kyeiwaa (a group of prominent Tabom and Ga elders some of which have passed away). Of all the agbe players I came to meet at Adabraka, whenever they come here, the late Mr Kodjo would say that "as for you people, the agbe [style that] you play is very different."

The headquarters of agbe is Nii Alasha's house at Nmaanmonna [street] because the majority of agbe [players] come from that house. And J. H. Kommey, nephew of Ataa Kwashie I, is the one who taught us how to play agbe . . .

. . . Because I have played adenkum for some time now, there is virtually no adenkum song I cannot sing. I have therefore not neglected the adenkum[26] of the Owooman[27] people.

The late Ataa Ankrah, also known as Ofatse, was our bintim[28] chief and when he died, it was decided that I succeeded him in Owooman but the Tabom people had already appointed me as the agbe chief so I handed the position to Ayitey, my son (nephew). He also could not hold the position because of certain issues and so I suggested that Kwaakwei be given the position but he fell sick some time later. For this reasons, I have [unofficially] taken up the bintim [position]. [However, agbe] is truly my duty . . . but I am also supporting the bintim and adenkum music. We will get someone who will lead the bintim music to make it great by the time I return to Accra.



Eric Morton and his family,
King Tackie Tawiah House
Accra, July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)

Interviewer **Juan Diego Diaz and Nathaniel Akwetteh, July 2016, in Ga**

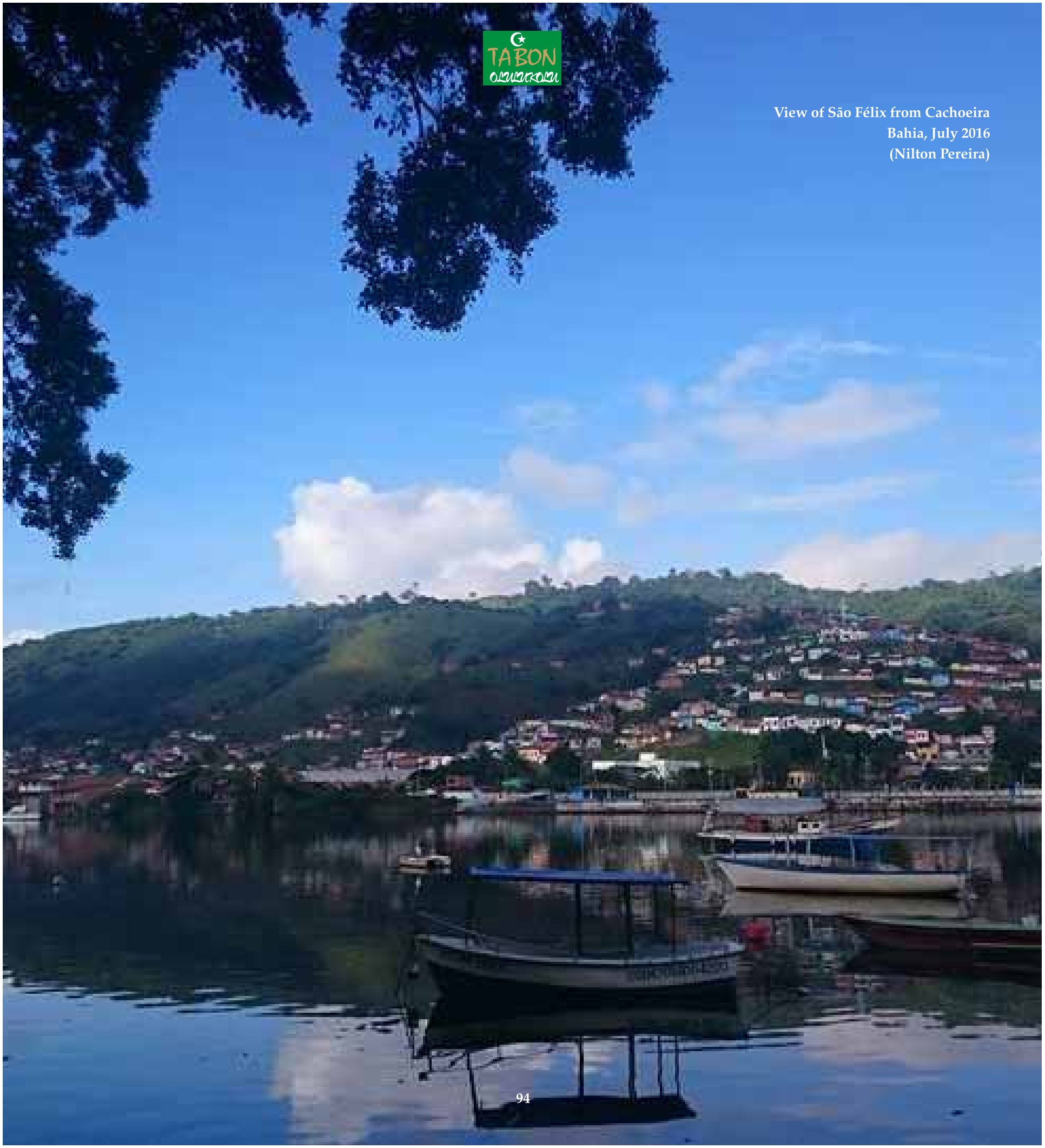
What is it like to be married to the Tabom agbetse?

Leticia Ankrah (Eric Morton's wife): He has suffered so much because of this agbe. He has really suffered. He had no one to help him [financially]. He responds whenever they call him [to play at an event]. When they call him in the morning, afternoon, evening, he responds and does whatever they require of him.



Eric Morton visiting Candomblé Terreiro
Ilê Axé Icimimó Agunjú Didê in Cachoeira, Bahia
July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)

Between July 12 and 31 of 2016, Eric Morton visited the state of Bahia in Brazil and had the opportunity to meet with musicians of various Afro-Brazilian styles, black activists, Candomblé[30] *practitioners and leaders of black carnival associations. He attended capoeira, samba-de-roda, samba-reggae, and ijexá performances, Candomblé ceremonies and taught agbe at various venues. These encounters mainly took place in the capital of Bahia, Salvador, but also in other towns of the so-called Recôncavo Baiano such as Cachoeira, Santo Amaro da Purificação and Valença. The following conversation and monologue took place in Salvador towards the end of his visit.*



View of São Félix from Cachoeira
Bahia, July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)

Interviewer **Juan Diego Diaz, July 28, 2016**

Why do you think the returnees like Nii Alasha and Mahama Nasso decided to leave this place (Bahia)?

Eric Morton: Because they (the returnees) were fighting there (in Bahia) and they were being killed, they decided to come to their home, their motherland (Ghana). That is why they came to Ghana but they are from here (Bahia).

Interviewer

Could you please speak about Bahia?

Eric Morton: I am here in Bahia for a purpose. Everybody in Ghana knows I am now in Bahia, Brazil. The people and everybody here like me. I have been to many places. [I have played] capoeira, drums, played with senior drummers. I met them [all].

Interviewer

Is Bahia similar to Accra?

Eric Morton: No no, it is different. This is because in Accra, I cannot [see] the caliber of people I [see] here in Bahia. I got through [local] protocol[s] [smoothly]. I met the vice mayor of Salvador—[Celia] Sacramento—and she took me to [eat] dinner.

Interviewer

Do you like the beaches?

Eric Morton: Oh yeah. It is very clean. It is like our place but this is different because you cannot (are not allowed to) make this place dirty. Accra is different.

Interviewer

What is different about Accra?

Eric Morton: Our country is too small but this place is big. It has a lot of people. There are different people, both men and women; [they wear] small bikinis, short pants. When you see Brazilian ladies, they are all fine, nice and beautiful.

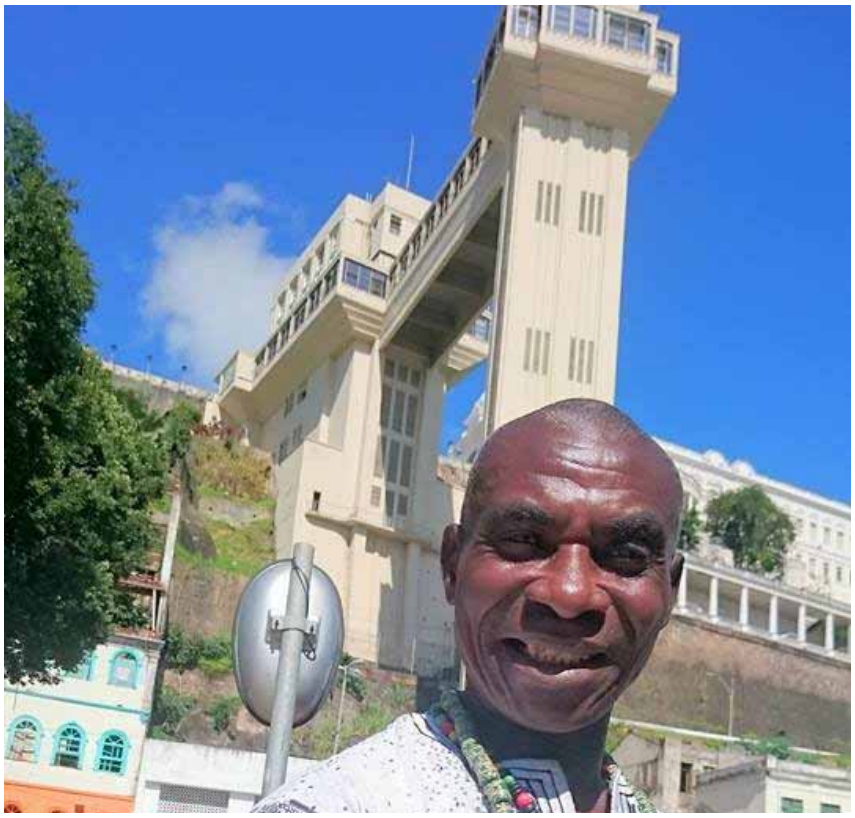


Eric and master drummer Gabi Guedes in Salvador



Eric and Capoeira mestre Cobrinha in Valença

Eric at Elevador Lacerda, Salvador



Eric and Agbe student in Salvador



Scenes of Eric Morton in Bahia, July 2016 (Nilton Pereira)

Interviewer

What about the buildings?

Eric Morton: Yeah, all the buildings are neat [and] everybody live in their house. Nobody goes to anybody's mansion. You have to be in your house. You do not go to anybody's house and you cannot talk to people [randomly in the street]. People are always moving from one place to another either in the morning, afternoon or evening. No one has time for [one] another [because they are] busy.

Interviewer

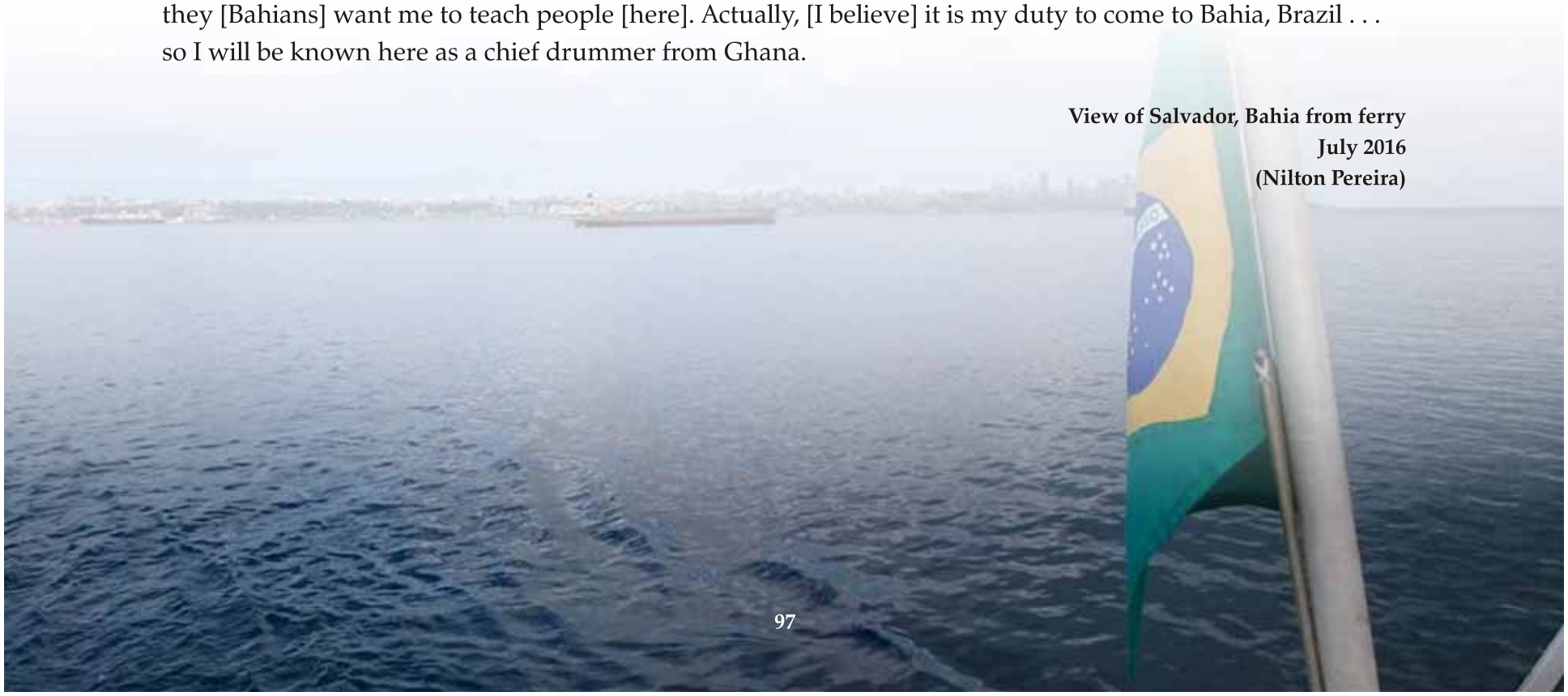
What about the people?

Eric Morton: They (Brazilians) are all nice and beautiful. You will not talk when you see them. You can only watch them. Seeing me tells them (when they see me they realize) that this man is an African. Yeah, they like Africa. I feel good. I am not tensed up and I walk during the day as well as during the night . . . I cannot walk like that in Accra unless there is a [specific] occasion . . . Actually, I freely walk during the day and night here. I attend parties, meet different drummers and play with them. That is beautiful.

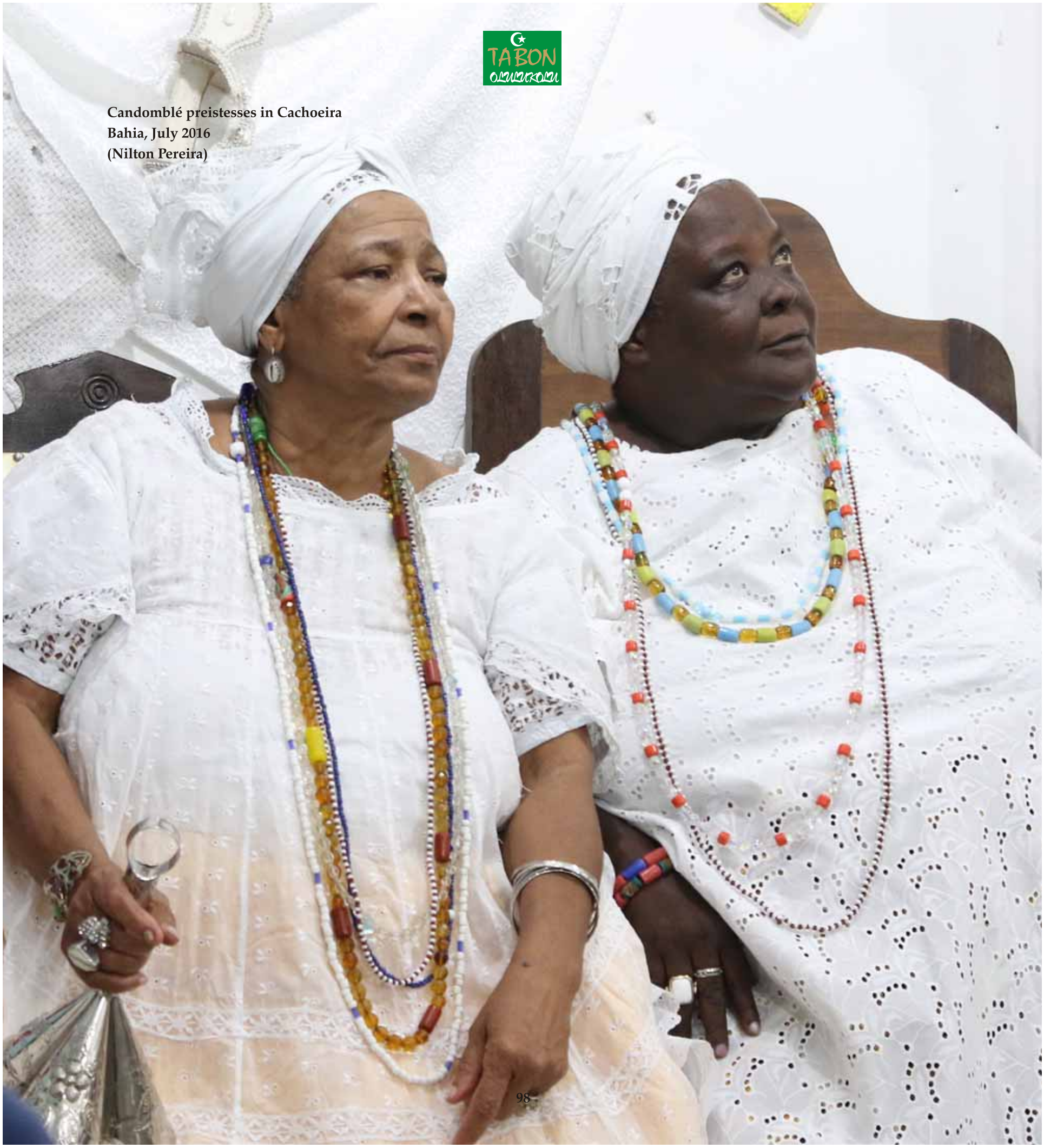
Interviewer

And they appreciated agbe?

Eric Morton: Yeah, they all appreciated agbe. [In] all the places I have been, I taught agbe and learned their musical styles. They enjoyed agbe so much because the dance movements are simple. The rich can also dance agbe. It is not restricted to only the common people. Agbe is also not common in Ghana. That is why they [Bahians] want me to teach people [here]. Actually, [I believe] it is my duty to come to Bahia, Brazil . . . so I will be known here as a chief drummer from Ghana.



View of Salvador, Bahia from ferry
July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)



Candomblé preistesses in Cachoeira
Bahia, July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)

Eric's Monologue in Ga

Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.

Hey my fellow agbe drummers and women of agbe, I greet you. Come and see something from Bahia, Brazil. You will witness the descendants of the Tabom who left here to [go to] Ghana. Come and see.

You must learn. You will progress if you learn. Some people feel you hate them when you correct them for their wrongdoings (e.g. for playing agbe drums or singing wrongly). They do not want you to correct them because you do not have a Tabom name (Morton is a recognized Tabom name but not directly associated with one of the families that arrived from Brazil). But although we do not have a Tabom name, we have strived to learn. We cannot leave it (the practice of agbe) to go because it is in our house and we strived to learn it very well . . .

From the time they came from Brazil to settle in Ghana, no one [from our community] has traveled from Accra to Bahia, Brazil but today I, Odarkwei, . . . have brought the Tabom agbe this far. I have showed it to the Brazilians because this is where it came from, and not Accra[30].

Shango's room (shrine at a Candomblé house) was opened for me. I have personally seen and testify that this is where Shango comes from and I have met him at three places (three Candomblé houses in Cachoeira and Santo Amaro). All his names have been revealed to me.

Together with the white men (this editor and Nilton Pereira), we went to [see] Shango at [Lekia Nelson's house in Nmaamnonaa before the trip] and I told him [that] I am traveling so he should welcome me. This is what he said [through Lekia] "go, the road is open, you are going home, if you are going, then go." Truly, since I got here, I have been assigned a new name in Shango's presence (at the Candomblé house Ilê Axé Oju Onire, in Santo Amaro, Eric was given the ritual name "Baba Ogum Onire" by high priest Pai Pote). I have been given necklaces and other things [related to Shango].

You should therefore know that I, Odarkwei, as I stand here, want every Tabom to know that they will be exalted from afar this day, as a result of where I have reached with the Tabom agbe. There is no need for hatred. We must progress once we are alive. So, let us progress in order for the whole of Accra to know that a documentary is [going to be] made about [the] Tabom.



Eric Morton visiting Candomblé Terreiro Ilê Axé Oju Onire in Santo Amaro da Purificação, Bahia, July 2016 (Nilton Pereira)


TABON



Posters of workshops and lecture demonstrations given by Eric Morton at the Federal University of Bahia July 2016 (Mestre Cobra Mansa and Music School, UFBA)



"Percussive Encounter Brasil-Pelourinho-Ghana" at Casarão do Lord, in the Pelourinho neighborhood of Salvador July 27, 2016 (Eliane Fernandez Facebook page)





Eric teaching Agbe at Pracatum Project in Salvador, July 2016 (Nilton Pereira)

I am also the composer of:

Nɛkɛ joo nɛɛ	This particular dance
wɔ manɳ joo nɛ	This is the dance of our land
Tabom bii	Tabom people
wɔ manɳ joo nɛ	This is the dance of our land
Brazil bii	People of Brazil
wɔ manɳ joo nɛ . . . (*)	This is the dance of our land

(*) This agbe song is in Ga and is the only one that is not in Yoruba in the agbe repertoire.

Standing here on the coast of Bahia, Brazil, [let me say that] it is me who composed this song.

Truly, I have come to witness that Nii Alasha and the returnee slaves to Ghana are from Brazil. I have seen a lot of signs since I got here. He (Shango) appears immediately I call him. He closely stands beside me. Olulukolu, Amogidiagbo, Omo Ijesha, Shango.

It is I who have made plain that Shango exists. It was not my pocket money that brought him but it was my effort, my thoughts, my wisdom and the way I talk that made a lot of people to calm down (those in Accra who doubted the existence or Brazilianness of Shango).

For those who doubt about the deity (Shango) and what was brought into [Nii Alasha's] house [in Nmaamnonaa street], get to know that the deity is from Brazil and it belongs to the one who built his (Nii Alasha's) house. I have seen him (Shango) here today. Therefore, for you who mock him in the house, it is your problem. As for me, I do not joke with him.

I attend church but I have also participated of it (the religious rituals of Shango) so, I do not back out [from either]. One's presence or absence [in Shango's activities] changes nothing [regarding the veracity of Shango's existence]. I am therefore telling you in Accra that all of you should recognize our Shango medium (Lekia Nelson).

I am the first one among the Tabom that God has chosen to come and see Bahia and speak about it. I have therefore come and seen Bahia, the beautiful Bahia. The young ladies here are too beautiful. Both men and women are very neat. You do not throw any rubbish on the floor. You do not eat and throw part of the food onto the floor. You do not even have to walk [all the time] on the streets as there are buses everywhere taking people to and fro from morning till evening.

I have also come to see a friend of [Mr. Alfred] Okoe Vanderpuije, the [current] mayor of Accra here. This friend of his is the vice mayor of Salvador (Celia Sacramento). I have seen a picture of the two of them here and she said she met Okoe in Accra and that Okoe Vanderpuije is her very good friend. She has given me her complimentary card. She asked me to visit Okoe on her behalf when I return to Ghana [and tell him that] I, Odarkwei Agbetse Eric Morton, have come here and seen [Celia] Sacramento. I have had a conversation with her, I was taken in her car to eat dinner and she asked if Okoe knew I was traveling. I told her "no, because this is a Tabom issue" and she accepted it.

I am coming in glory for all the Tabom people to know that I have promoted [the] Tabom [image in Bahia] . . . I have promoted agbe too and they (those who were taught agbe in Bahia) have progressed so much.

I am bringing the pictures for people to know why I came here. I did not come here just to roam about. Rather, I have been to many schools, I have been to the [Federal] University [of Bahia], and many other places. I have met with very experienced drummers and musicians. I have been with them at a party dubbed "African view Bahia, Brazil" (the actual name of the event was "Encontro Percussivo Brasil – Pelourinho – Gana " or Percussive Encounter Brazil – Pelourinho – Ghana) with people crowding a dance floor and I performed with them. I played for some time and even played agbe.

Eric Morton and Salvador's Vice Mayor Celia Sacramento
Salvador, Bahia, July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)



Also, I have taught [agbe] to the people of Brazil because Tabom [culture] belongs to Brazil. Because they (the returnees) settled and lived among the Ga, it is now a part of us. However, we should know how to talk whenever we are deliberating on issues.

I therefore leave you with God, people of Owooman, women of adenkum and men of bintim. Greetings to everyone at Nmaamnonaa, in my own grandmother Ahenenye Norkor's house where Amanshia, my mother, rooted me. A word to the wise is enough. I greet the people of Bukom . . . I wish that all have a good year



Eric Morton carrying his drum Pelourinho in Salvador, July 2016 (Nilton Pereira)

The top of the Tabom Linguist's Staff of Office
Graffiti Project, November 2012
(Redd Kat Pictures)



Chapter 5
Socio-Political Organization

In Bahia most of the returnees lived in urban or semi-urban settings in a society dominated by a white Portuguese and Brazilian elite. Historians Luis Nicolau Parés and Lisa Castillo (2015) have written that during the last part of the 18th century and first half of the 19th century, there was a small group of relatively successful blacks (mostly freed Africans) in Bahia that accumulated their wealth mostly through trading. They had certain economic privileges like ownership of land and businesses but little political power in a racist society. It was precisely this group of blacks who decided (and could afford) to return to West Africa after the Malês Revolt of 1835. But they also brought along some of their African and creole servants and less wealthy associates.

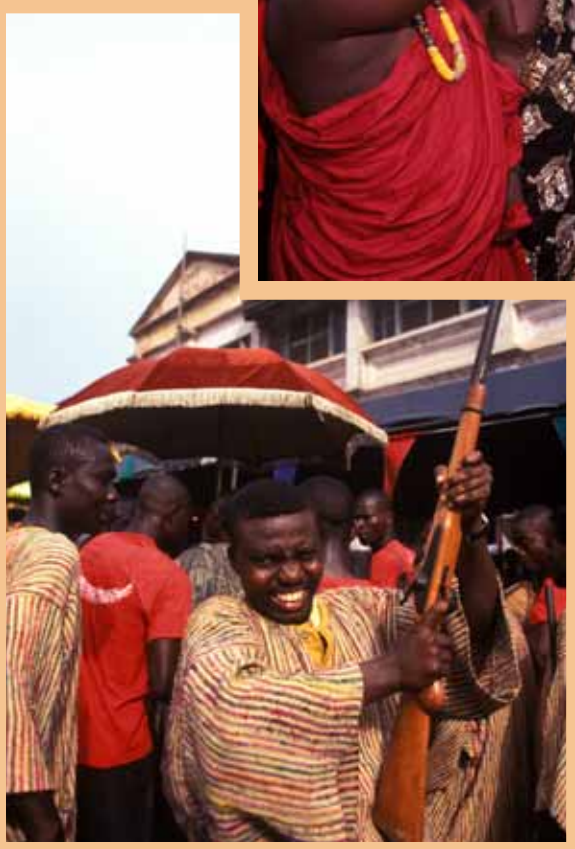
The arrival in Accra of the returnees brought an important change to the socio-political structure they had in Bahia. Soon after their arrival the Tabom adopted a system of chieftaincy modeled after that of the Ga. The system includes a Chief who is elected by a Council of Elders and a court including a Queen Mother, spokespersons (also called linguists), representatives, assistants and other dignitaries. This system of chieftaincy is an important symbol for the Tabom and has helped organize the community in matters of collective interest such as land ownership, relations with neighboring groups, celebrations and relations with actual and potential partners.

The interviews in this chapter talk about the role and importance of the chieftaincy system and are told mainly by members of the court (the Chief, the Queen Mother, and their linguists). The stories also explain how the Tabom have pursued and nurtured relationships with the Brazilian Embassy in Accra, visitors from Brazil and with local politicians. All together, they reveal how the Tabom have constructed a dignified image where they have maintained close relationships with those in power.











The installation of Nii Azumah V, Chief of the Tabom, Accra, 26th February, 2000 (Carlos da Fonseca)

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012**

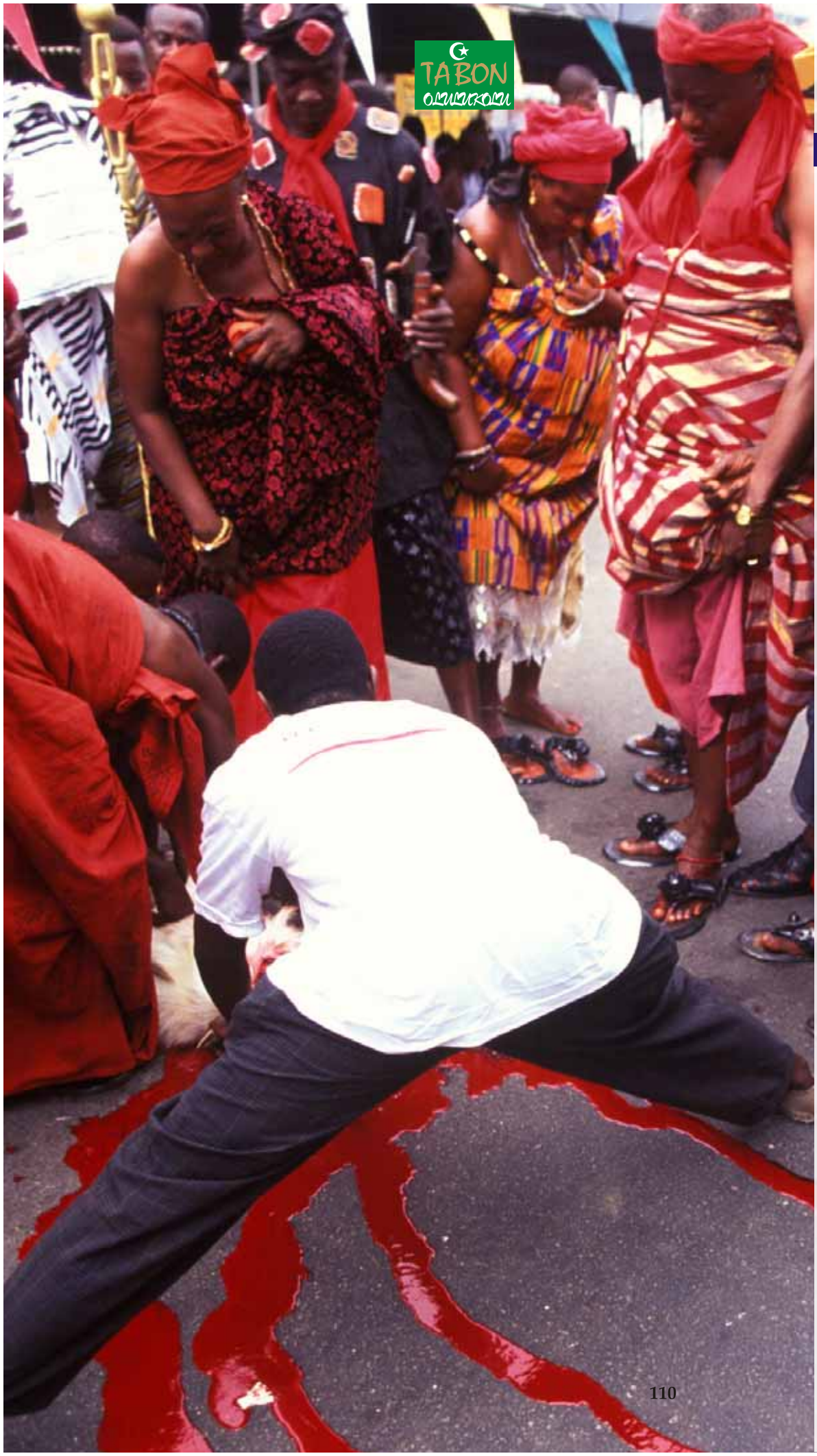
Can you talk about the organization of the Taboms?

Dan Morton: My grandmother is (was) the leader of the women's group among the Tabom community that is why I named my office after her nickname - Awo Gbeke. Awo Gbeke means younger woman (younger mother). When I grew up, I saw her in the activities of Tabom, drumming, dancing and she used to take me along. You had to sit down while they were dancing and they used to call me Awo Gbeke's husband (i.e. the young mother's husband). When they saw her they asked where is the husband? That is, the little boy. I was then about four years old.

When I grew up, I looked at the Tabom people and realized that they were no longer together as I saw them when I was a little boy. I used to see them drumming and dancing in funerals and things like that [but then] I stopped seeing that. So one day when the fourth chief died (Nii Azumah IV died in 1981) I went to the funeral and as I was sitting down with them, I said "why don't you organize the Tabom people because they have scattered, they are not like before. Why don't you gather them together." So they said "OK, if that be the case let us do it together. [But they asked] "where are we [supposed] to do it?" I said "we must go to Brazilian House." They said "it's too far." I said "well that is the only place they used to go to their meetings." So they went. I didn't go and they came back to call me. So the next meeting I went and they said that I must be the Chairperson [of the Tabom community]. No election [involved in that decision]. Being the elderly man amongst them, I accepted it and became the Chairman. During our meetings they said "our chief has died and is gone, so let us organize ourselves to get another chief." So I gathered them and they had a fifth chief called Nii Azumah V. So this is how I raised the cup and brought them altogether.

During that period we saw in the [news]papers that a Brazilian Ambassador had come. So I said to them, why don't we write a letter to this Brazilian man to introduce ourselves to him [and to let him know] that there are Brazilians in this country. So we wrote the letter to him and he accepted it. That is how through Dan Morton, our link with the Brazilian [Embassy] has become something indescribable. Our link to Brazil now is first class but the only thing [that is lacking is that] the majority of us have not been there. I am the only one among the group who has been there. They don't have money to buy the tickets but at least, they should try and ask. At least our chief [should] visit Brazil before he dies.

But they (the Brazilian government officials) never ask us [if we want support to go to Brazil]. [They should] at least invite one of us to come and see Brazil. You have Brazilian Africans (black Brazilians) in your country [Brazil] but all the time you are coming, you don't bring any. It is only the white [Brazilians] that you bring. We want to see some of the Africans [black Brazilians] so that our people will really believe that, truly speaking yes, part of us live in this country. We want to see our African [Brazilian] brothers. We've seen too many of the whites so our people don't believe that truly we are from Brazil[31].



Interviewer Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012
How were you elected Tabom chief?

Nii Azumah V: Our last chief, Nii Azumah IV, died [in 1981] and for seventeen years [we had] no chief, nothing. No one was appointed [to seek] for a new leader for the Tabom people until the elders met and decided that we had to save our heritage. Meetings were held with Ga chiefs and they accepted to [help us elect a new chief]. So a committee was set up and it was chaired by Mr. Dan Morton, ex officio of the Ghana customs and police. It was decided that we should now appoint our chief [because] our former chief was gone and for seventeen years we had nobody to control or direct the activities of the Tabom. As a result of that, I was elected Chief to lead the Tabom people not for anything but to maintain [our] unity. But even after we have been elected we chose to be [part of the] Ga Council[32].

A traditional blood ritual performed during the installation of Nii Azumah V,
(Carlos da Fonseca)

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012, in Ga**

Can you tell us your role/position in the Tabom community?

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: By the grace of Jesus Christ, I am the Otseame (traditional linguist) of the Tabom Chief and the entire Tabom land. I walk closely with the Tabom Chief. He can discuss issues with me in private, issues that are not supposed to be spoken or heard in public and I must ensure such issues remain indoors. When someone wrongly speaks in the presence of Nii [Azumah V] and the elders, I will have to polish it before I tell Nii. In the case where Nii also speaks, I will have to polish it so as to make it more presentable. Nii's problem is my problem. I'll have to be present (show up) whenever he calls on me, irrespective of the time. The issues Nii discusses with me are for the benefit of the entire nation and the Tabom community as well.

Personally, I am referred to as a Tabom person wherever I go and I also feel proud about it.

Interviewer

What other role do you play apart from conveying messages from the Chief and making those messages publicly correct?

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: When something happens, Nii will convey the message to me then I, in turn, will inform the community. The same way, when the community needs to communicate to Nii, they will have to channel it through me. This exercise reveals the respect we the community have for the relationship between us and Nii. Nothing can therefore get to Nii without channeling it through me just as when Nii also wants to communicate with the community or anyone, he will have to do it through me before the message can get to everyone.

It is, however, a difficult task. You may be insulted and rebuked but you will have to desist from anger because of the position, which makes you a leader of the people. Even when someone tells you something bad, you have to keep it secret because it is in private that one is advised. This brings peace and further progress for Tabom.

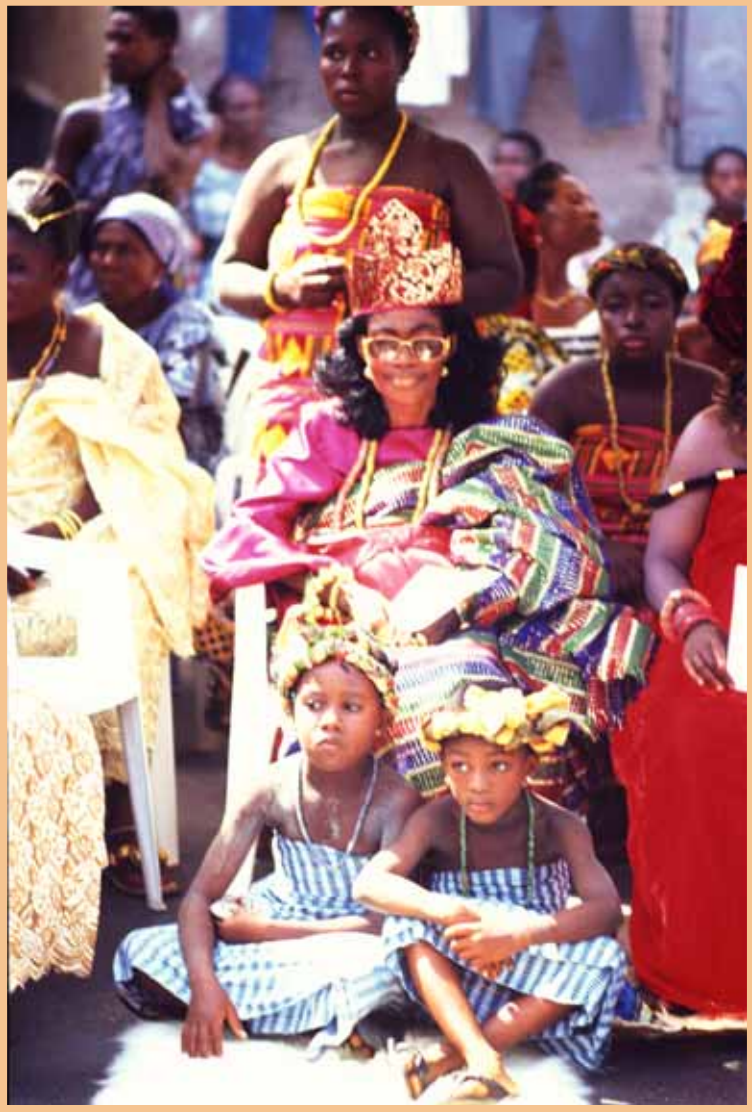
Interviewer

What kind of meetings do you hold as a community?

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: We meet on the first Saturday of every month in the Tabom House (Brazil House) to deliberate on issues that will enhance the progress of the Tabom community and the entire nation. We have sub Tabom groups such as Nelsons, Mortons, etc. There are [some] twenty names that make up the Tabom community here in Ghana. So we can be identified by these names.









Scenes from the installation of the Tabom Chief (Carlos da Fonseca)

Interviewer

Talk about the organization of Tabom families

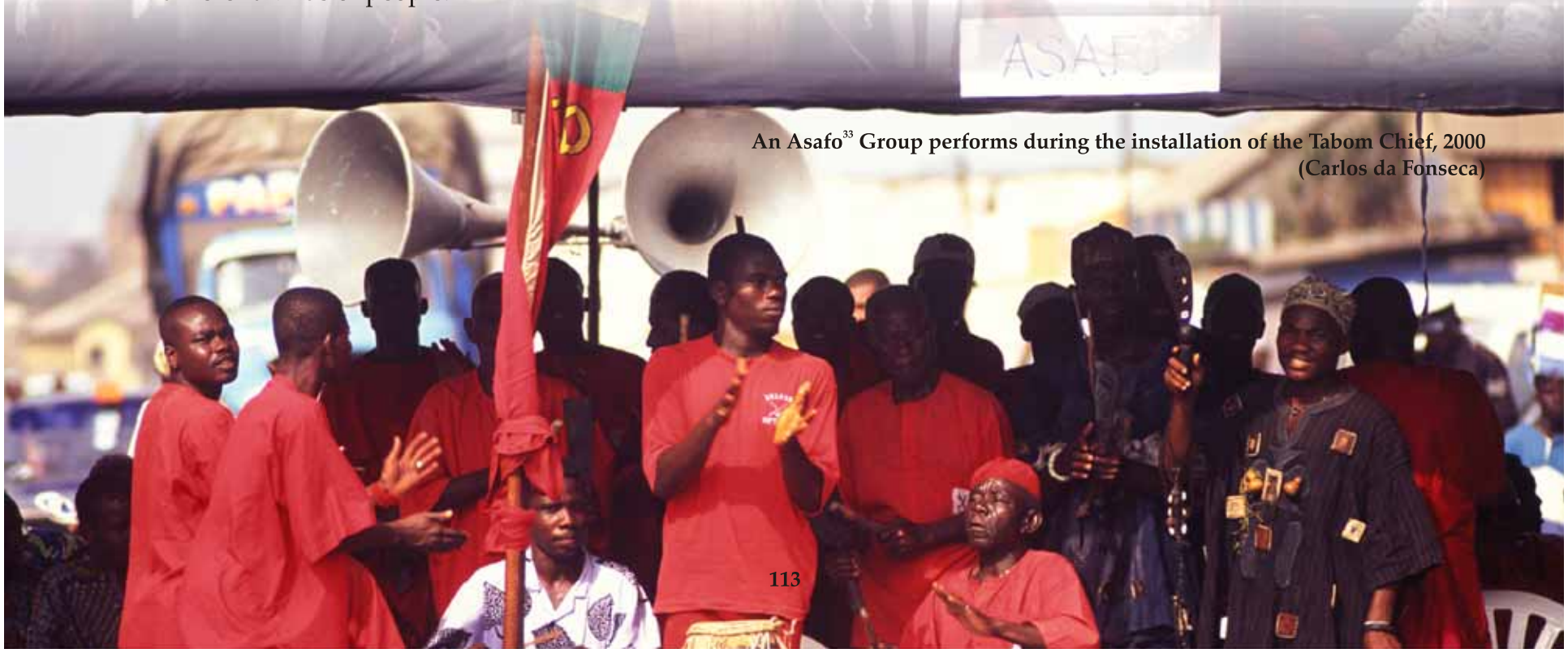
Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: We are part of the Ga state so we participate in all Ga rituals and traditions peacefully. I am from the Kwofie family. My great grandfather is King Tackie Tawiah. He gave birth to Robert Nii Azumah Kwofie who in turn gave birth to my mother Mary Fatima Kwofie. The traditional position of our house/lineage is that of the Asafoatse and Asafoanye. There are different kinds of Asafoatse. Currently, I am Asafaotse Nii Tawiah III in our house. We also have Asafoanye Naa [Supiana] III. She is also from the Kwofie family/lineage. All the houses have a particular order [or system] for attaining such positions as this eliminates the struggle for positions. I can be sent anywhere by the chief and even in his absence the linguist's staff which I carry symbolizes his presence. The necessary respect must therefore be accorded. Wherever Nii goes, everyone must stand once the linguist's staff arrives there to show respect to Nii.

Interviewer

Please talk about how unified the Tabom are

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: . . . There is peace and love amongst us and it reflects wherever we go because we do not want any form of dispute to creep into the Tabom. When we move, we move as a group. When you see the Otseame's staff, you become conscious of Nii's presence and when Nii takes a step, his elders and all his followers join him. We then move together and in unity.

We also relate to the entire Ga state just as we relate to the Otublohums. We attend every function that takes place in the Ga state. During the Ga festival, we do whatever must be done. If there is the need to hold a durbar or forum, we take the initiative through which we advise each other. We talk of our weakness and the need to move on (improve) the coming year. We deliberate on what must be done in peace and love in order to progress. So when you see our Kings and Queens, we have Asafoanyemei and Asafoatsemei and different kinds of people.



An Asafo[33] Group performs during the installation of the Tabom Chief, 2000 (Carlos da Fonseca)

. . . We have a link with the Brazilian President[34] and ambassador. We have been interacting with them little by little so as to establish a good relationship with them. Nii said earlier that we would like to visit the place (Brazil) in order to bring peace to us. It is not good if no one knows there. When going, the tradition can also go. By this, all can be helped to bring unity to all of us.



Durbar held for President Lula of Brazil in Accra, April 2005 (Ricardo Stuckert)

Interviewer
What is the inheritance system among the Tabom?

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: We Taboms are concerned with both patrilineal and matrilineal inheritance. I am of matrilineal descent, but I also hold a position that permeates the whole of Tabom. The man who fathered me came from Abola on the Accra High street.

Interviewer
How is the traditional marriage of the Tabom?

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: For marriage, there are houses you must begin with. Every house (and by extension, every family) has its own way of going about it. The Taboms domiciled among the Ga follow the Ga tradition and when you look at [those living among] the Akan, [they follow suit] too. Until you perform the marriage rites as required by the traditional house, you cannot go and register at the Register General or City Council. You can also not go to a pastor to have your wedding ceremony. You will have to perform the traditional marriage ceremony before you can proceed with the other marriage rites.



We follow the same pattern as every ethnic group [where we are immersed]. When you want to get married, we give you the requirements. The man's lineage will notify you of all the requirements and when a child is born afterwards, we know what name to give that child. When that name is uttered, people will know that this is a Ga and you can be taken to your house or told which family you belong to. Our Ga and Tabom names are the same[35] . When you get lost and mention your name, you can be taken to your house. The name does not allow you to get lost. If you mention your first and last name, your family name and your father's name, you will be [easily] located[36].

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012, in Ga**
How did you learn about stories of your ancestors?

Naa Afua Aminatu II: Children feared to approach the elderly in those days and so there were questions we just couldn't ask unlike these days when you can [more easily] interrogate us. You could not do that when we were young. But if you happened to chance on them while engaged in a conversation, they probably can call you and let you [hear their stories]. But even with that, the elder would not plainly reveal what they were saying to you so we were not able to know most of the stories.

Interviewer
Is it that they do not know [the stories]?

Naa Afua Aminatu II: They know but they just don't engage us in conversation. By our custom or tradition, children are not supposed to interrogate the elderly. If you happen to chance on some elders who are engaged in a conversation, you cannot join in without them inviting you. If you really want to hear everything for the sake of preserving the history, then you will have to hide somewhere and listen to them. That is how you can validate what you know. They say this thing is not like that, ooooo! You then keep what you have heard to yourself until the day you meet one of the elders who were engaged in the conversation, and if you are in a good relationship with them, you can further interrogate them. But even with that, they will not fully give you the details of what you seek. We do not know but it is something they [protect].

When a child is given birth to, they instruct the child in this way: “You haven't seen what you've seen, you haven't heard what you've heard, as a humble child of Ga, the wind blows before you speak.” These ideologies have become like a barrier between the old and the young in Ga society. When you are questioned in the midst of the elderly, you must remain silent even if you know the answer. Sometimes, the elder will give you an eye signal to leave or keep your mouth shut.

Interviewer
So is it possible that all the stories about the Taboms coming from Brazil are not completely true?

Naa Afua Aminatu II: They cannot be lies because if they were, the elders would not speak about them in our hearing.


TABON
ORDEM E PROGRESSO

Chapter 6

"I am a Ghanaian and a Brazilian": Dualisms and other Identity Complexities

Many Tabom see themselves as Brazilians. But this does not mean that they reject their Ghanaianness. Most speak Ga, have Ga names, live in traditional Ga neighborhoods and are fully immersed in Ga traditional culture. But this does not detract from the fact that they see themselves as Tabom. Identity is based on ideologies of difference and Brazil is what makes the Tabom different, unique.

The stories in this chapter address the question of Tabom identity, particularly how it stands next to Ghanian and Ga identity. They reveal a belief in language as a crucial identity marker and thus show how the Tabom see their loss of Portuguese and their efforts to "re-learn" it. They also address the issue of names fluidly crossing Ga and Tabom genealogies.



State Linguist, Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo, Tabom Chief, Nii Azumah V, Brazilian Ambassador, Irene Vida Gala, and retired boxer Azumah Nelson Brazil House, November 2012 (Redd Kat Pictures)



Views of the Elmina Bay, Ghana, 2012
(IVG)

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012**

Talking about the Tabom, are you on the Brazilian side or the Ghanaian side?

Nii Azumah V: I will put it this way. During the last [Football] World Cup (South Africa, 2010), it came to the quarter finals where Ghana was to play with Brazil (both Brazil and Ghana advanced to quarter finals but did not actually play each other) . . . Then journalists came to us and asked where I stood in that match of Ghana against Brazil. It was a very interesting question, and I told them that I stand for both of them as one. For the fact that my great grandfathers were in Brazil, they were educated in Brazil, they grew up in Brazil, and have a Brazilian culture in them. It means I have part of that Brazilian experience in me. Now, I was born and bred in Ghana. I had my education and everything in Ghana. So I have a Ghanaian root. So at the background I told them that in my mind Brazil should win the match but deep down in my heart as a Ghanaian, I opt for Ghana to win and they published it. Then I had letters from other teams in Brazil and all over. It was even in the Ghanaian newspapers . . . So there is nothing wrong with having a dual nationality in Ghana. Already, it is backed by law to have a dual citizenship in Ghana (since 2002). So I am both Brazilian and Ghanaian.

Interviewer

How do you educate people about yourselves and what you do?

Nii Azumah V: . . . Some people even came to suggest me that once we have been elected and made chiefs, we should forget about our family names and adopt the Ga names. I stood against it because names are heritage. When everything is gone or we put aside our names, we lose our identity. For instance, I am called Abdulahi. Whenever this name is mentioned, people think I am from the Northern region of Ghana. That gives us the opportunity to explain to them why I am called Abdulahi. [That is one of the ways in which] we have been trying to revamp and bring up the Tabom [image]. We once had a Bishop of Accra called Bishop Nelson. His name is Haruna, [which is a Muslim name], but he maintained the name Aruna Nelson and still [was] the head of a Christian (Anglican) religious [institution].

Now all of us have maintained our religious names. Our name is a religious name because of the Muslim community we met at Bahia and we interacted with them . . . and so we want to keep that relationship intact. We do not want to change our names. As my sub [assistant] sitting here, he is Gibril by name and he is still keeping it . . . We have a lot of Tabom people bearing the Muslim name . . . So I stood against it (changing our names). I told them it is of no use. I gave them examples as I am doing now. They understood us so.



Tabom dignitaries (From left to right: Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo [chief's linguist], Atofotse [chief's representative], Nii Azumah V [chief], Naa Awo Gbeke Abiana III [Queen Mother], Vivian Ado [Queen Mother's representative], and Naa Afua Aminatu II [Queen Mother's linguist]) November 2012 (Source: Redd Kat Pictures)

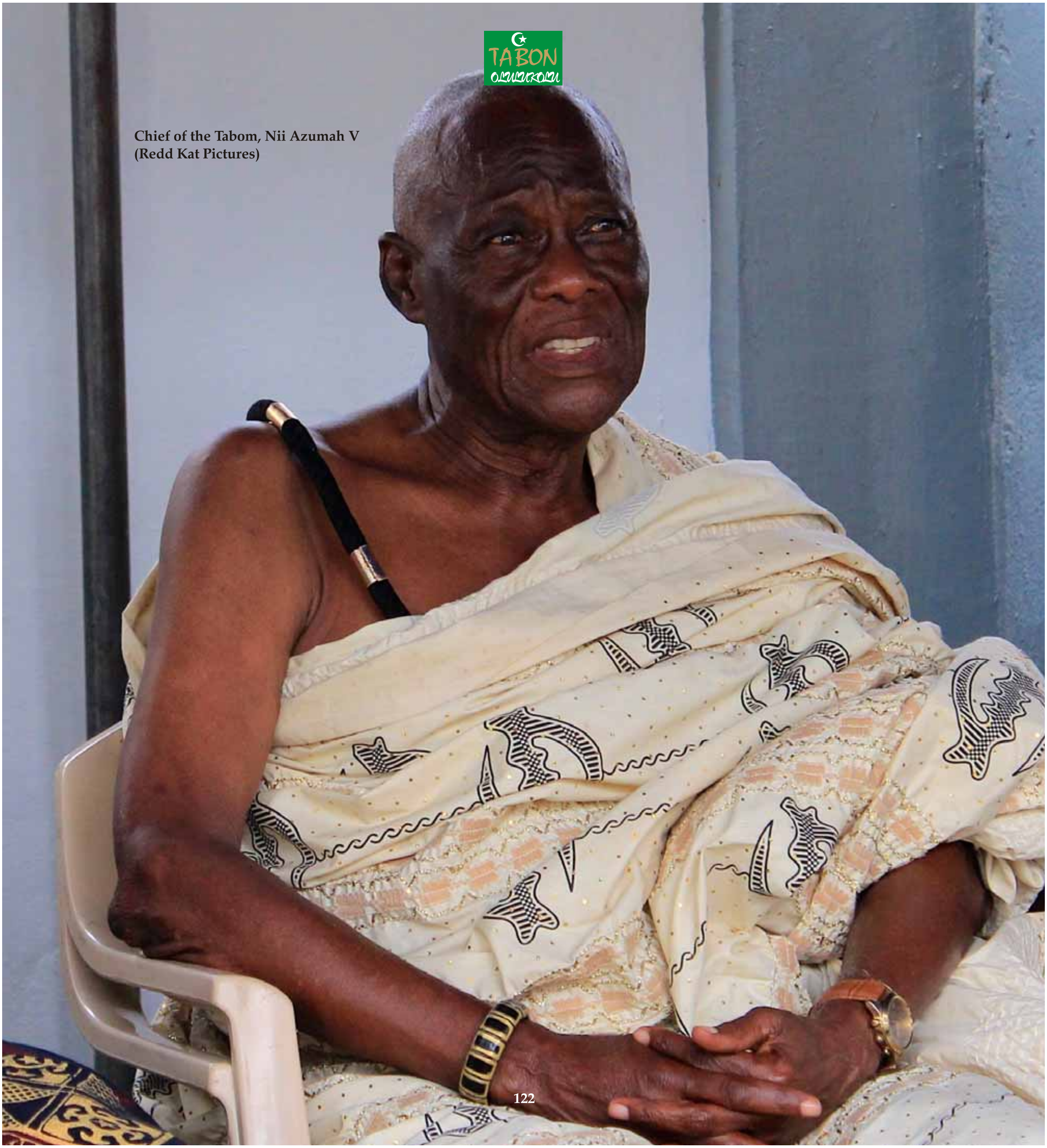
Interviewer

You just talked about how the Portuguese language does not exist anymore in Ghana . . . and this idea of being a Ga and having a Brazilian background. So could you talk more about your feelings and sentiments of loss of one's heritage?

Nii Azumah V: We nearly lost our Brazilian culture, unlike Benin. Benin for instance . . . [managed to maintain] their culture and customs . . .



It will interest you to know that when we started this chieftaincy thing, I was able to come into contact with Brazilian journalists who were taking interest in [us]. They sent me letters and I sent them [letters too as we were] trying to keep that relationship despite all the setbacks and the language [barrier]. I had a misfortune. I should have been in Brazil. When President [John Agyekum] Kufuor was on the seat, he was to visit Brazil and I was to go with him[37].



Chief of the Tabom, Nii Azumah V
(Redd Kat Pictures)

Unfortunately, during that period, I had diabetes and so the President went [without me[38]].
When he came [back], it was very interesting . . . According to reports I had, when he went to the International Press Conference to deliver a speech and he started, the people started shouting "where is Nii Azumah," "we want Nii Azumah" . . . This shows that we still have supporters and sympathizers . . . I discussed it with the previous [Brazilian] Ambassador [in Accra] and he said "OK," that they will be working towards that (to visit Brazil) . . . they hope to establish an airline project . . . and when that project starts, some members of the Tabom community in Ghana and Benin will be offered the opportunity [to visit Brazil] . . .

So we have made all efforts for us to [go to Brazil] . . . If all things go well by next year, we hope to see our relatives [in Brazil] . . . because we want to have a very strong relationship [with them]. For the single reason that we have not been there, [it] does not mean we do not associate with [them].

Interviewer

I want to find out about some of the unique symbols you have and their meaning.

Nii Azumah V: This is a Staff which is always held by a Linguist. If I am to go to a place and for some reason I could not, I send him with my Staff . . . The symbol portrays someone eating while the other sits and watches him. It means "something that is yours is yours." You cannot claim what does not belong to you. Unless you are invited, you cannot share in someone else's food or possession. As a result of this, we do not have any problem with our chieftaincy . . . We have two royal families among the Tabom people that [alternate the Chief position] . . . So we do not fight over the chieftaincy. We have laid down rules[39].



Historical picture depicting the returnee Nii Alasha Nelson on the far left and Ga Mantse Nii Tackie Tawiah I sitting third position from the right. Taken approximately in the 1880s-90s (Marco Aurelio Schaumloeffel)



Mrs. Jane Abiana Addo (nee Nelson), a prominent Tabom, owner of Cake Tekniks International, and her son, Sony Addo (Brazilian Embassy in Ghana)

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012**

Tell us about the Tabom names.

Dan Morton: Our relationship here with our children is like a close related family. I am always with my children so they know they are Tabom people. They, their children, and their grandchildren, know that the name we have is Tabom because if I mention my name, [people here in Accra] will think that I am a Hausa man or somebody from the North . . . Our name is related to them [Ghanaians form the North] because I think when our ancestors left Brazil, they went through Nigeria. They settled there for sometime before they came here and I think there they [obtained] that Nigerian name.

We have kept them: Aruna, Mahama, Ashetu. When we mention them (our names) we know we are Tabom people but if you mention them [to others] they think you are Muhammadu (possibly refers to names related to Islam). This is the understanding of . . . Ghana people.

I am Tabom and part of those who came from Brazil. But these people are Ga (points to a neighbor's house). When I mention my name to them they think I am a Muhammadu. My boy (son) who lives here is called Haruna. Gas don't have [the name] Haruna. So all my children, they know they are Tabom people. Where my shop is, it's the area of Tabom people because when we came, they rented that piece of land at Asylum Down and the history will tell you that from Customs up till Christianborg at the seaside, people who occupied that place were Brazilians. When you go to the [Ghana National] Archives, you will see their names.

When they (the Brazilians) came, the Otublohum people said, you people from Brazil are civilized, and because of your cleverness, please stay at the seaside so when the enemy comes in, you are going to face them before us. That is the reason why when you go to [Ghana National] Archives you will see their names, although some of them have changed their last names.

Interviewer

You say that you are the only Tabom who has visited Brazil. Would you like to tell us about it?

Dan Morton: When I had the chance to go to Brazil, I went to the Brazilian Ambassador [in Accra] and because of my connection to Brazil, it didn't take me hours to get a visa. Just like that. And the ambassador asked me to go and stay in his house [in Rio de Janeiro].

You could see the sea, fine buildings stretched about a mile and there was a road. Beautiful road and when the ladies and men are going to the beach, they wear their dress from their house. They do not go to the beach before they unstrip themselves. They unstrip themselves from the house to the beach and then you see them playing football on the sand. You see when you come to Ghana, look at our beach. But there, so beautiful. Beautiful!.

My problem is that I wanted to go to Bahia but they were having exams and there was not an available translator to accompany me.



Aerial view of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (EMBRATUR)

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012**
So today in your everyday activities, what does it mean for you to be Tabom . . . Do you live as a Tabom?

Rebecca Naa Louisa Nelson: Well, living everyday as a Tabom makes me realize that I come from a family which has a history linking to people in Brazil.

Interviewer
So do you think about Brazil?

Rebecca Naa Louisa Nelson: Yes! I think about Brazil because the history about the Taboms started from Brazil and there is nowhere in Ghana where you [can] mention your name [without having] people asking questions about where you came from and as soon as you tell people you are a Tabom, they want to know more. What Tabom is? Who did they originate from? So when you are able to tell them your history and link it to Brazil then [they go] "wow!, this person is a special person." They don't think about you as a slave or whatever but they rather think of you as a person coming from two different countries. Then they look at you as a special.

Interviewer
So when you hear about Brazil today, Brazil is very popular. I mean the Olympics are coming up there (in 2016), the [Football] World Cup is coming up there (in 2014), and it (all that) is in the media. So what do you think when you hear Brazil on radio, on TV. When people talk about it.

Rebecca Naa Louisa Nelson: What I think about Brazil in terms of sport is that they are very good. For instance, lately, when they played in the [last Football] World Cup, I think there was a match between Ghana and Brazil. It's like you are in Ghana, you were born in Ghana but somehow your mind is somewhere else thinking about whether to support this or that [country] but, although you are in Ghana, you are also there supporting them in terms of sports. So you think in terms of sports like a Ghanaian. In your mind you know you are a Ghanaian but in your heart you are a Brazilian.



Eric Morton dancing capoeira
in Cachoeira, Bahia
July 2016
(Nilton Pereira)

Interviewer **Juan Diego Diaz, February 2016**
Is your grandmother a Tabom?

Edwin Brown: Yes, but she is deceased. Actually, my grandfather is from Osu but I do not know where my grandmother comes from. While growing up, most of us had no idea where our relatives came from. When my grandmother was alive, some of her siblings who came around had Islamic names and names that are not of Tabom descent like Abiana. I always asked how these relatives got such names but they never gave me an answer.

My mother is an Ewe from Togo. It is my father who has the link with my [Tabom] grandmother. My father's name is Adotey Brown. My interest in music and dance is what got me closer to the Tabom tradition and that is the reason why I have a little knowledge about the Tabom.

Interviewer
Do you feel that you are a Ga or a Tabom?

Edwin Brown: It depends on where I find myself. When I am with the Ewe people, I say I am an Ewe but when I am with the Ga, then I say I am also a Ga, a Tabom.

Interviewer
So is being Ga and being Tabom the same thing or is there a difference?

Edwin Brown: There is a difference because the Ga musical types (kpanlogo, kple, out, etc.) are different from those of the Tabom, who mainly perform the agbe music genre. The agbe musical type is mostly performed for the dead but presently, they are trying to make it a recreational musical type. I have not yet seen it being performed at ceremonial parties. The agbe is performed during the wake-keeping of a deceased person as well as during the one year memorial ceremony of a deceased [and the] Okudjondjor.



Performance during the installation of Nii Azumah V, 1998 (Carlos da Fonseca)



Copacabana Beach, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
(EMBRATUR)

Interviewer
So what is Brazilian about the Tabom?

Edwin Brown: I do not know much about Brazil but [when] I take a closer look at the names and language of the Tabom, I do not see any kind of relationship between them and Brazil. The ship is the only kind of link I can think of when trying to associate the Tabom with Brazil because here in Ghana, we do not normally use ships as a means of transport.

Interviewer
Then, do you feel Brazilian?

Edwin Brown: Yeah, although I do not have a Brazilian name but based on the Tabom history that we are from Brazil, I feel Brazilian in a way.

Interviewer
Would you like to visit Brazil?

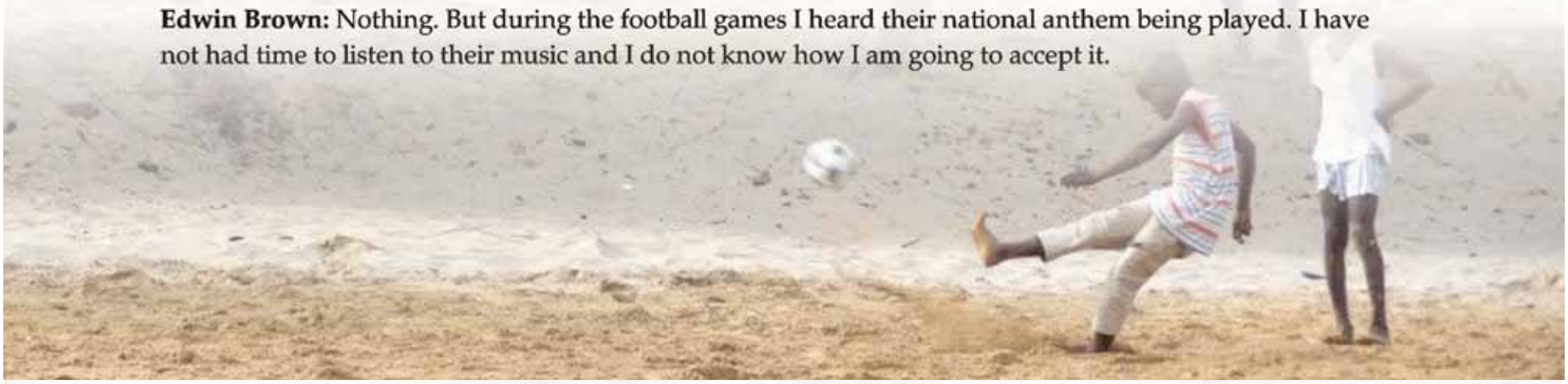
Edwin Brown: Sure. When I get the opportunity, I would.

Interviewer
How do you think Brazil is going to be?

Edwin Brown: I think it will be a cool place but there might be villages there. I am also sure the agbe performed here in Ghana might be different from the one performed there. Maybe in Brazil, agbe song text might be purely in Portuguese.

Interviewer
What do you know about Brazilian music?

Edwin Brown: Nothing. But during the football games I heard their national anthem being played. I have not had time to listen to their music and I do not know how I am going to accept it.



CHRONOLOGY

TABOM CHIEFS

Nii Azumah **I** (1836 - c.a. 1865)

Nii Azumah **II** aka Nii Alasha
(c.a. 1865 – c.a. 1900)

Nii Aruna **I** (c.a. 1900 – 1926)

Nii Azumah **III** (1936 – 1961)

Nii Azumah **IV** (1961 – 1981)

Nii Azumah **V** (1998 – Present)

(Marco Aurelio Shaumoeffel [2008:41])

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, Nov. 2012, in Ga**

Do you [Tabom people] still maintain any form of culture that you can identify as solely Brazilian?

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: The difference is that the food you eat, your music, dance and your dressing tells how different you are from the others. The names also help to identify who you are. We have [about] twenty names that make up the entire Tabom: Morton, Bannerman, Fisherin, Nelson, Kwofi, and so on. So when you hear any of these names, you get to know that the person is a Tabom. We Taboms are easily identified through our dance, music and dressing. We eat koose, massa, fula, akara and waakye during our Ga traditional rituals because we brought them from Tabom (Brazil). We have also been taught the Brazilian samba which also helps to identify us. We also have a ritual called Olulukolu used to praise the king. We inherited the Olulukolu ritual from Nigeria because a part of us came from there. Olulukolu speaks of the king's presence. This ritual also identifies us very well in the Ga Mashie state. Our Tabom flag is a green leaf with [a] white and star in it which further helps to identify us[41].

Interviewer

I realized that throughout the interview you have been speaking Ga. Are there any remnants of the Portuguese language in the community?

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: No. As for the Portuguese language, we are learning it but we are yet to grasp it. Only a handful of us understand. Those were the ones who have gone to study the Portuguese language. We had a school here that focused on teaching us the language but it did not help us that much. Classes took place once a week and they did not help our studies. Another challenge was that the class was always made up of the beginners and those Taboms who are advanced in the Portuguese language [couldn't progress]. For such a class, all beginners must be grouped separately and taught. The class must also be as frequent as possible[42] .

Interviewer

Why do you think the use of the Portuguese language declined over the years?

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: At that time, we all scattered. We all could not stay at one place or together so we also could not speak the language. That is why we lost the language. But if we are taught, then the entire community can come and study it. I recall we were told that a Portuguese will come and teach in the University. That will also benefit everyone but the initiative has not taken place.

Interviewer

What does it mean for you in this present time (2012) to bear the title of Tabom?

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: It gladdens my heart so much that, by God's grace, a commoner like me has a certain name/title in the Tabom state. That gives me the opportunity to meet and interact with both ordinary and prominent people, learning about ourselves [something that] we can live [and pass] to generations yet unborn. This will be a lesson for them (the future Tabom generations); [knowing] that their grandfather or great grandfather hailed from the Taboms, who are Brazilians. I'm very happy.



The Tabom Agbe Group with the Brazilian Ambassador at the Brazilian Residence, July 2016 (Gerard Nartey)

Interviewer
You have become more or less Ga, is it still necessary in this present time to bear the Tabom title?

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: It is the Lord who has permitted it to be so. We have our identity but we are part of the Ga state and because we are part of the Ga Mashie people, we do everything with them. But we still maintain our identity and being part of the Ga State or Ga Mashie [poses] no hindrance to us. We beat our chest for who we are; our names help to identify us and it is very significant to us. We do not overlook certain things or show favoritism.

Interviewer
How known are the Tabom in Ghana?

Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo: Not everybody knows we as Taboms exist. It will therefore be helpful to educate people about the Brazilian descendants in Ghana, we the Taboms. A documentary can even be made and sent to some TV stations for people to know that there are Taboms in Ghana.

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012, in Ga**
So now, do you feel proud to be Tabom?

Naa Afua Aminatu II: Actually, if I did not have that feeling, I would have not allowed them to elect me to this position [the Tabom Queen Mother's linguist].

Interviewer
Why do you people use Ga things?

Naa Afua Aminatu II: You see, Nii [Azumah V] made you understand that when the Brazilians came, they met the chiefs of the Ga state, the Otublohum chief precisely. For me, my grandfather is from that side—Otublohum. He married my grandmother who was a white lady. So I am on both sides - the black and the white. My father's side is from Otublohum and the Otublohums are part of the Akwamu people (Otublohum is actually part of the Ga state. The Akwamu state is related to the Akan).

Interviewer
In our conversation, I realized that most of you strongly desire to go back to Brazil. I would like you to tell us why you desire to go back to Brazil even though your forefathers fought to be freed during their stay in Brazil because of the ill-treatment accorded to them. Why do Tabom want to visit Brazil?

Naa Awodey (Queen Mother): The reason why we strongly desire to go Brazil is because our forefathers have told us so much about the place. From the time of our forefathers till now, we communicate with people and have a good relationship with the embassies that approach us. However, we have not been there. We want to go there to see our brothers and sisters whom we left there. We want to know if they remember us or even have some good plans for us. This is why we mostly desire to go and visit them in Brazil.

Presentation of Portuguese Books to Nii Azumah V in October 2003 and Portugese Lessons taught by Marco Aurelio Shaumoeffel (Marco Aurelio Shaumoeffel)










Naa Afua Aminatu II: Like our king, Nii Azumah V has already said, we are told stories about our forefathers [who] came from Brazil and settled here, and [through them] we picture Brazil. But we have not been there before as my Queen Mother said and so whenever they tell us of Brazil, we feel they are only mere stories or just a film because we have not seen it. We also want to see it. We wish they (the Brazilian government) can invite Nii [Azumah V] to Brazil so that when he comes back, he could probably explain it better to us. To confirm the stories that our forefathers have been telling us about the place (Brazil). If he goes and we do not even get the opportunity to go, we know he can explain things to us to have a better understanding of the place.

Interviewer
It is interesting that you are advocating to go back to Brazil because of the stories you have been told. But when we see you now, we see little of Brazil.

Naa Afua Aminatu II: As we have said, we do not speak or understand the [Portuguese] language. Like Nii have said, we have had a lot of challenges during the last twenty years. Probably that is the reason why we could not recall everything our forefathers told us. Because our forefathers were not formally educated, they could not explain things to us in detail so I cannot say much because I might give wrong information about our history. Not being able to say much about our ancestry or history is basically not our fault, it is as a result of the challenges and difficulties we faced in the past.

Interviewer
Finally, what is the aspiration of Tabom?

Naa Afua Aminatu II: I cannot say much. In everything, the men are stronger than the women. You realized that Nii gave you a lot of information. So they can tell you more.

Interviewer
What stories are you telling your children? Do you tell them they are Ga or you tell them of the emotional connection you have with Brazil?

Naa Afua Aminatu II: We tell them those stories and they in turn interrogate us that even though we always claim to be of Brazilian descent, we have not been there. They tell us we have not even visited Brazil to tell them more about the place or even take pictures of the place and show to them.

Interviewer **Graffiti Project Artists, November 2012**
As young persons, does it mean anything to you the fact that your ancestors came from Brazil? Does it mean anything to you or do you see yourself more as a Ga?

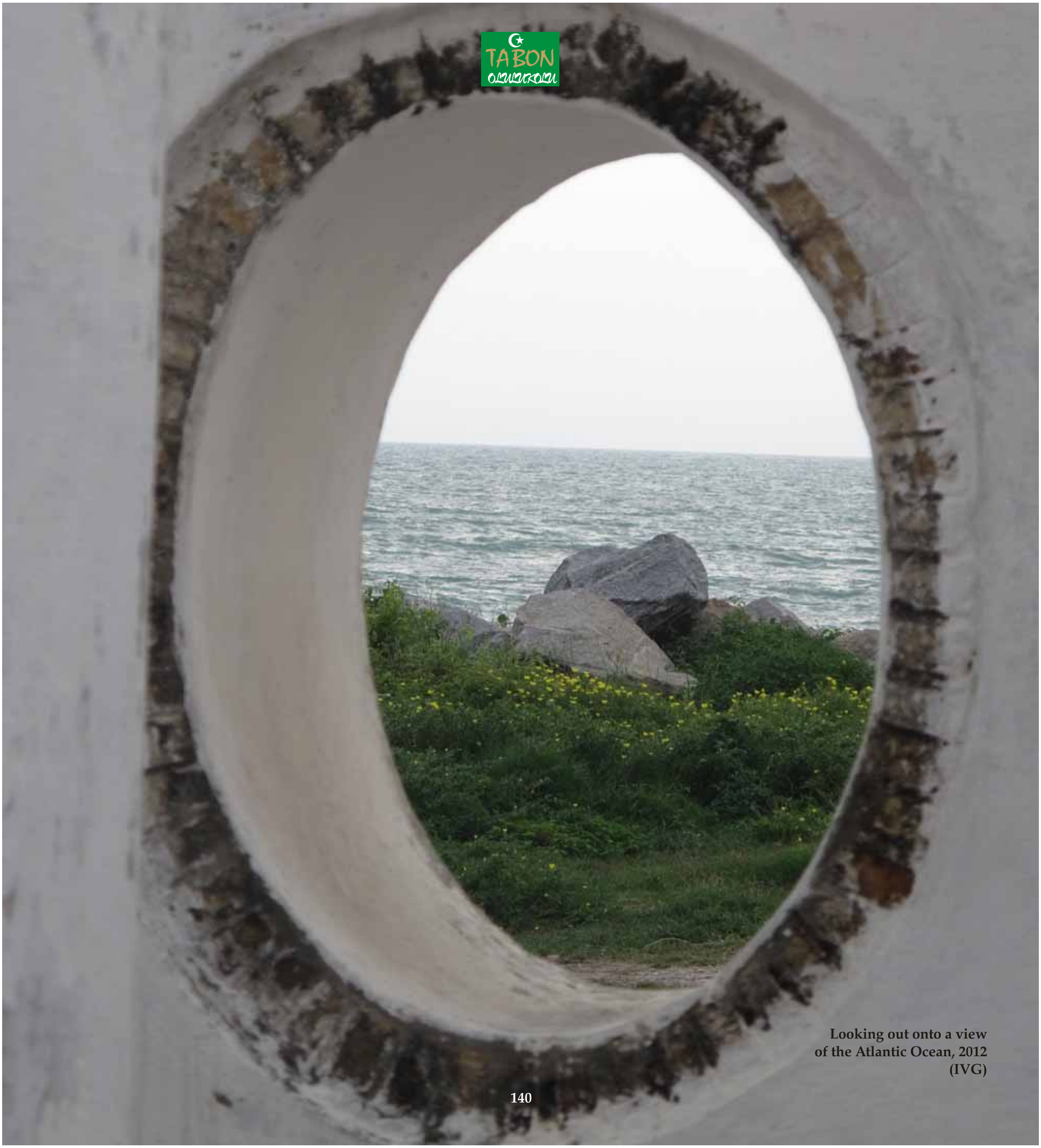
Rudolph Boye: Actually my father is a Ghanaian and my mother is half Ga and half Tabom so I'm still proud to be part of the Tabom family because I had the privilege to meet the former [Brazilian] Ambassador and the former President of Brazil, so I feel it is a privilege for me to meet such great people.



**Arrival in the Gold Coast (Ghana) of Chief Alhaji Brimah I, of Lagos (Nigeria)
with the Paramount Chief of Accra, King Tackie Tawiah I.
Like the Tabom, there are many freed Brazilians who resettled among the Yoruba in Lagos.**



The Ilojo Bar, Tinubu Square, Lagos, Nigeria
(also known as Casa do Fernandez)
This historic building in the Brazilian District in Lagos was demolished in September 2016
(Gillian Hopwood, Architect, 1954)



Looking out onto a view of the Atlantic Ocean, 2012 (IVG)

Roland Boye: It means a lot to us because we behave like a Ga, we walk like a Ga we do everything like a Ga. Even when the Tabom king is having celebration we do in collaboration with the Gas but I don't think in Brazil they do that. So we behave more like Gas but we call ourselves Taboms. Why Tabom? Do you understand the meaning of Tabom? I will tell you the meaning of Tabom.

Tabom is just a greeting. You know, when they settled in this area, they could only speak Portuguese because the Tabom language is Portuguese, so when they saw you as a Ga they greeted you, "Tabom, Tabom" it is a greeting. So the people of the community know them as Tabom people because that is their greetings and that is the only thing they could say to Ghanaians like how the Italians say "ciao, ciao". That how they were called Tabom.

Interviewer

Now that you've lost the language, would you want to go to Brazil at any point? I mean is it of any importance of you to go to Brazil?

Roland Boye: Oh, to go to Brazil just to watch the [Football] World Cup or something . . .

Rudolph Boye: For me, I'd like to go to Brazil for a visit and come back. Like you said, we all need to learn the Portuguese language and the school has started right here. So I think they have finished the first and second part and I believe the third part, some of us will have to join because very soon the World Cup is coming up (in 2014) and when you go you have to introduce yourself like "Hey I'm a Tabom" and people would ask "do you speak our language?"

Interviewer

Interestingly I don't think people in Brazil are even aware of the Tabom people.

Rudolph Boye: Oh yes, they know.

Rudolf Boye: If they didn't know, how come the very president of Brazil just moved from his seat to come to see this house (the Brazil House)?

Interviewer

It could be for diplomatic reasons.

Roland Boye: A lot of people come from Brazil to see these houses. Not just Brazil but all over the world.

Interviewer

You are young men and would be having children. What would you tell your children? Would you want your children to identify as Tabom?

Rudolph Boye: Well, the history is there so definitely they will know, just as our great grandmother told us, that we are descendants of Nii [Mahama] Nassu and we all know [that] he is one of the returnees from Brazil.

Endnotes

1: Recent estimates of the trans-Atlantic slave trade by David Eltis (2010) put the total number of people arriving to the Americas from Africa in 10.7 million, of which 5.3 million came from West African ports and nearly one million came specifically from the Gold Coast. Brazil received a total of 4.9 million people from the African continent, of which 1.2 million came from West Africa, and nearly 65 thousand came from the Gold Coast. The State of Bahia received a total of 1.55 million people from Africa, of which 850 thousand came from West Africa and nearly 13 thousand came from the Gold Coast. These estimates are based on ports of embarkation and disembarkation which not always coincided with the places of origin and final destination of those who crossed the Atlantic. According to Amos and Ayesu (2002) and Parés and Castillo (2015), between three and eight thousand Africans and creoles from Bahia returned to West Africa during the 19th century. There are no documented estimates of how many of these arrived specifically to Accra. Kwame Essien estimates that the current population o descendants of Brazilians in Ghana is around five hundred thousand (Essien 2010:203).

2: Nii Tackie Tawiah I (1817-1902) was the 20th king of the Ga state. He reigned between 1862 and 1902. Known for opposing the British occupation in the Gold Coast and for his friendly attitude towards the Tabom people. He led the Ga into the Awuna wars and was exiled to Elmina in 1875.

3: Nii Ankrah was the chief of the Otublohum division of the Ga state during the time of arrival of the Brazilians to Accra. During this period he was under the Ga Mantse Nii Tackie Kome I, who reigned between 1825 and 1856 (Schaumloeffel 2008:42)

4: The name Mahama Sokoto has clear Muslim influences: Mahama is related to Muhammed and Sokoto is a city in Northwest Nigeria with a strong Islamic culture since the XIV century. The city is the seat of the Sokoto Caliphate.

5: According to Anthropologist Marion Kilson (2016:175), documented wars in which the Gas were involved during the 19th century include: 1) Nyantrabi War (1802) led by Nii Amugui I; 2). Saturday War (1809) led by Nii Amugui I; 3) Thursday War (1811) led by Nii Amugui I; 4) Saturday Homowo War (1811) led by Nii Kudza Okai; 5) Asamankua War (1812) led by Nii Adama Akuredze; 6) Katamanso War (1826) led by Nii Tackie Kome I. The Gas drove the Ashantis out of the coastal areas with the help of the British and other groups.; 7) Chief Ankrah Expedition (1829) led by Nii Tackie Kome I; 8) Chief Kwatei Kodzo (1831-33) led by Nii Tackie Kome I; 9) British bombardment of Osu and La (1854) led by Nii Tackie Kome I; 10) British and Asante War (1863) during the reign of Nii Tackie Tawiah I. “In 1863 the Ashanti invaded Saltpond district, an event which threw the whole of Southern Ghana into a state of deep confusion and severely dislocated all economic activities” (Dickson 1969:145). The Ga and other coastal groups engaged in various battles.; 11). First Awuna War (1866) during the reign of Nii Tackie Tawiah I. A series of campaigns in the Volta Region over control of the palm oil industry that had on one side Awuna, Ashantis and Akwaamu and the Ga, Ada, and the British on the other (McIntyre 1967:127-28); 12) Second Awuna War (1874) during the reign of Nii Tackie Tawiah I; 13) Prempei's Expedition (1895) led by Nii Tackie Tawiah I

6: The Ga State is divided into six polities: Accra (Mashie), Osu, La, Teshie, Nungua, and Tema. Each polity is subdivided in various sections. Otublohum is a section of the Mashie polity near Usher Fort.

7: Based on unnamed oral accounts, Schaumloeffel has written “It is said that one of the main achievements of Nii Azumah III (who reigned between 1936 to 1961) was the final recognition of the status of the Tabom within the Ga traditional State as a community of Brazilian origin but integrated into the Otublohum Division . . . Thereby Nii Azumah III was no longer considered as a headman but as a Brazilian chief within the Ga traditional State with the same recognition and political-representative cultural role as any other chief of the Ga reign” (2008:57-58).

8: Kwame Essien has written that it is not clear how exactly first-generation Brazilians acquired all their land and how they transferred it to their children (2010:259). Up to the beginning of the 20th century, Essien wrote, “Brazilian descendants needed the approval of a Brazilian chief to transfer land and other properties to other parties. This notion of ownership was challenged by representatives of the Aruna family” and this led to various internal legal confrontations (ibid:265-66). Essien documents four land dispute court cases over these territories (ibid:251-59). The conflicts over Brazilian land ownership were further complicated as many non-Tabom were also interested in occupying this land. Essien wrote “Legally, a number of non-Tabom people gained access to land in this area by purchasing them from heads of Tabom families or Tabom chiefs, who were the rightful representatives of land sales” (ibid:238).

9: The Brazil House is a historic building of the Tabom in Accra where the descendants of returnee Mama Nasso live. It is located in the Otublohum section and is considered one of the first houses built by the Tabom using block architecture. In 2007 it was renovated with funds from the Brazilian government.

10: Asafoanyemei and Asafoatsemei are titles of female and male traditional warriors respectively in the Ga community. Today they are symbolic. They are also used by the Tabom. The current Tabom Asafoanyemei is Mrs. Christiana Lartey aka Naa Supiana III, a descendant of returnee Mahama Nassu who lives in the Brazil House. And the current Tabom Asafoatsemei is Nii Tawiah III

11: Various authors have written that some Tabom engaged in slave trade activities during the 19th century (Parker 1995, Amos and Ayesu 2002, Esssien 2010). John Parker has written “it was reported in 1864 that members of the Brazilian community of the Otublohum akutso, themselves ex-slaves, controlled a flourishing trade in slaves from Krepi, who were readily bought . . . for farm purposes” (1995:140).

12: Georgina Theodora Wood (born in 1947) is the Chief Justice of Ghana Since 2007. According to Schaumloeffel, “she is the daughter of W. L. Lutterodt Tabom, elder responsible for all the issues related to the Brazil House, and great granddaughter of Mahama Nassu, the founder of the house and one of the Tabom who returned from Bahia to Ghana” (2008:99). In 2008 she visited Brazil to participate in the Bicentennial Celebration of an Independent Judiciary of Brazil.

13: According to Schaumloeffel (2008:52), the First Scissors House was built in 1854 in the property of George Aruna Nelson, the third chief of the Tabom (Nii Aruna I), between 1900 and 1926. This was “the first tailor shop in the country” and “after Brazil House, one of the most significant material symbols of the Tabom in Ghana” (ibid:48). The building “burnt down due to a failure in its electric system. Only remainings the strongest walls are left” (ibid:55). This occurred on October 19th, 2007.
The First Scissors House was located in Salaba Street in Accra, one of the family houses of Nii Azumah V, a descendant of its founder, Nii Aruna I.

14: Samuel Nelson, a member of the Tabom Nelson family, was a Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports in Ghana from 1984 to 1991. According to Schaumloeffel (2008:94) Samuel Azumah Nelson studied physical education at the University of Scotland and acted as Vice President of the All-African Amateur Athletic Confederation from 1973 to 2003. In addition to his position at the Ministry of Education, he was also a counsellor of the current Tabom chief.

15: Samuel Azumah Nelson (born in 1958) is a prominent Tabom and one of the most famous boxers from Africa. His career spanned from 1979 to 1998. He won and defended WBC world titles in the Featherweight and Super Featherweight categories between 1984 and 1996.

16: Dr. Titus Aruna Morton (1918-2013) was a distinguished medical practitioner of the Tabom community who is credited for being the “the first Ghanaian doctor to establish a private medical practice” and “was for years a personal physician of President Nkrumah” (Rawlings 2014).

17: “Olulukolu amogidiagbo” is a common expression uttered by the Tabom in most celebrations. Schaumloeffel (2008:23) wrote that most Tabom are unaware of the exact meaning of this expression. The chief Nii Azumah V and other Tabom speculated that “ 'olulukolu' was a war cry issued by the Tabom king, so that his followers would immediately reply 'amogidiagbo' ” (ibid).
Exploring a possible Yoruba meaning of this expression, Schaumloeffel was told by unnamed Yoruba speaking Nigerian informants that “òlu 'lu 'kòlu', means, in free translation, 'the King has arrived' or 'you are a great person' . . . The reply of the subjects, ‘amogidiagbo', means 'the strong people will pay attention or listen' ” (2008:24).

18: Rt. Rev. Aruna Kojo Nelson, a member of the Nelson family, was an Assistant Bishop in the Anglican Diocese of Accra between 1966 and 1978 and Provost of the Most Holy Trinity Cathedral Church between 1963 and 1977 (Pobee 2009:193, 417)

19: Nii Alasha or Alasha Nelson is a name that most Tabom associate with the second Tabom chief, Nii Azumah II. Nii Alasha was the eldest son of the first Tabom chief Nii Azumah I, who reigned between 1836 and c.a. 1865. Alasha replaced his father as a chief in 1865 until his passing, approximately in 1900 (Schaumloeffel 2008: 41).
According to Schaumloeffel, the returnee João Antônio Nelson, also known as Nii Alasha, “was born in Brazil in 1826, arriving therefore in Accra aged three” (ibid:42-43). This account puts the date of arrival of Nii Alasha, and by extension of the entire Nelson family and Shango, in 1829.
However, the same author reported that some authors and members of the Tabom community have also used the name Nii Alasha to refer to the first Tabom chief, Nii Azumah I (ibid). It is thus unclear to which of these individuals is Eric Morton exactly referring to.

20: Okudjondjor is a funerary ceremony held forty days after burial by the Tabom people. Some Tabom like Eric Morton and Lekia Nelson claim that this celebration is a continuation of Islamic funerary practices brought by returnees from Bahia.

21: Fula is a drink made out of millet and ginger. It is common among Muslims in Northern Ghana and also used for funerary rites by the Tabom.

22: Okudjondjor is a funerary ceremony held forty days after burial by the Tabom people. Some Tabom like Eric Morton and Lekia Nelson claim that this celebration is a continuation of Islamic funerary practices brought by returnees from Bahia.

23: The expression “Yaagbe” in Ga may mean “go and clean,” “go and kill” or “go and stop.” The expression “Yaagbe joo” means “go and dance” (p.c. Nathaniel Akwetteh, Accra, Aug. 28 2016).
According to Salomon Armah, Eric Morton's junior brother, a Tabom who lived in Lagos between for 24 years and is fluent in Yoruba, “The original word in Yoruba [from which agbe derived] is “egbe”, which means to raise (animate) the song or dance for people to join in. The word that we know today (agbe) is a corrupted version of the original [Yoruba] word, “egbe.” The dance movements they (the Tabom) make during this dance are basically the exact main movements of the bata dance (in Nigeria). The drums used in agbe music are also the same drums that are used during a bata dance performance (p.c. Salomon Armah, Accra, Sep 5, 2016).

24: It is not clear if Mr. Morton's word “Ijesha” refers to “Ijesa,” the people who live in the city of Ilesa in the Nigerian state of Osun; “Ijesa” or “Ijesha,” a historic kingdom centered in the city of Ilesa; or “Igbesa,” a small town in the Nigerian state of Ogun, located some 15 km west of Lagos.

25: Odwira is an important festival celebrated by the Akan people since the 18th century and with religious connotations (Adams 2010:33). It is also celebrated by the Ga people in Accra as a result of the strong presence of Ashantis in this area.

26: Adenkun is an Akan music style that uses long necked gourd rattles and in which women play a prominent role (p.c. John Collins, Accra, Sep 9, 2016).

27: Owooman (related to Owoowe) is a family compound in the Ga Mashie polity near Bukom, where the descendants of Owoo live. It is also known as Faasee.

28: The Ga are heavily influenced by Akan court music (e.g. adowa, asafo, fontomfrom-obonu, etc.). Due to this influence, it is possible that bintim actually refers to mpintim, an Akan court music style that utilizes calabash drums similar to those found in Northern Ghana. This music style was probably appropriated from the Dagbon people when the Ashantis invaded Tamale and Yendi in the 18th century and took away their royal drums and their musicians as slaves (p.c. John Collins, Accra, Sep 9, 2016).

29: Candomblé is an umbrella term referring to a group of syncretic religious practices in Brazil combining Catholicism. African worship and in some cases, Amerindian beliefs. It was created by enslaved and freed Africans and creoles mostly during the 19th century.

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31: For a fuller discussion of the politics of race in the relationships between the Tabom and Brazilian governments since the 1960s, see Kwame Essien (2016, chapter 9)..

32: Largely based on oral testimonies by Nii Azumah V himself, Schaumloeffel (2008:73-80) offers a lengthy account of the process of selection and preparation of Nii Azumah V as Tabom chief, and of the details of the crowning ceremony.

33: According to A. Turkson, asafo is “an ancient warrior organisation that exists in all Akan societies of Ghana” and also practised by the Gas and Ewes (1982:4).
The same author suggests that the Ga developed an indigenous musical tradition of asafo inspired by the effutu asafo music of the Fanti people due to geographical proximity (ibid:6). The ensemble includes a bell and a set of barrel-shapped drums of various sizes. The style also features song and dance.

34. Former president Luiz Inácio “Lula” Da Silva has visited Ghana in 2005, 2008, and 2013. In all occasions he met with officials of the Ghanaian government and with the Tabom in durbars and other celebrations.

35: The Tabom have unique family names such as Nelson, Nassu, Aruna, or Peregrino that are associated with the returnees and distinguish them from the Ga and other Ghanaian groups. However, many Tabom have intermarried with Gas and thus many individuals today may have Ga surnames but retain a Tabom identity through their maternal lineage. The same identity complexities occur—although to a lesser degree—when the Tabom intermarry with members of other ethnic groups such as the Ewes or Ashantis. See Essien (2010:122-28, 182-89) for a fuller discussion of Tabom genealogies.

36: Ga names often reveal the Ga polity, the clan or lineage, the parents and even the position of the person within their family. Naa Afua Aminatu explains that Tabom names also reveal this kind of information within the Tabom community.

37: During his presidential term (2001-2009), President John Agyekum Kufuor made one official visit to Brazil in July 2006 to hold bilateral discussions and attend the Second Conference of Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora in Salvador, Bahia..

38: Kwame Essien (2010: 313) confirms that Nii Azumah V indeed received an invitation by Lula's government to visit Brazil after Lula's first visit to Ghana in 2005. The visit was, however, postponed and “almost became a reality” the next year (2006). Based on testimonies of the Tabom chief himself, Essien wrote that the visit was not concretized due to organizational issues which compromised certain local protocols. These issues included failing to give enough time of preparation in advance of the trip and failing to invite other members of the Tabom court, indispensable to perform certain rituals (Essien 2010:314-15).

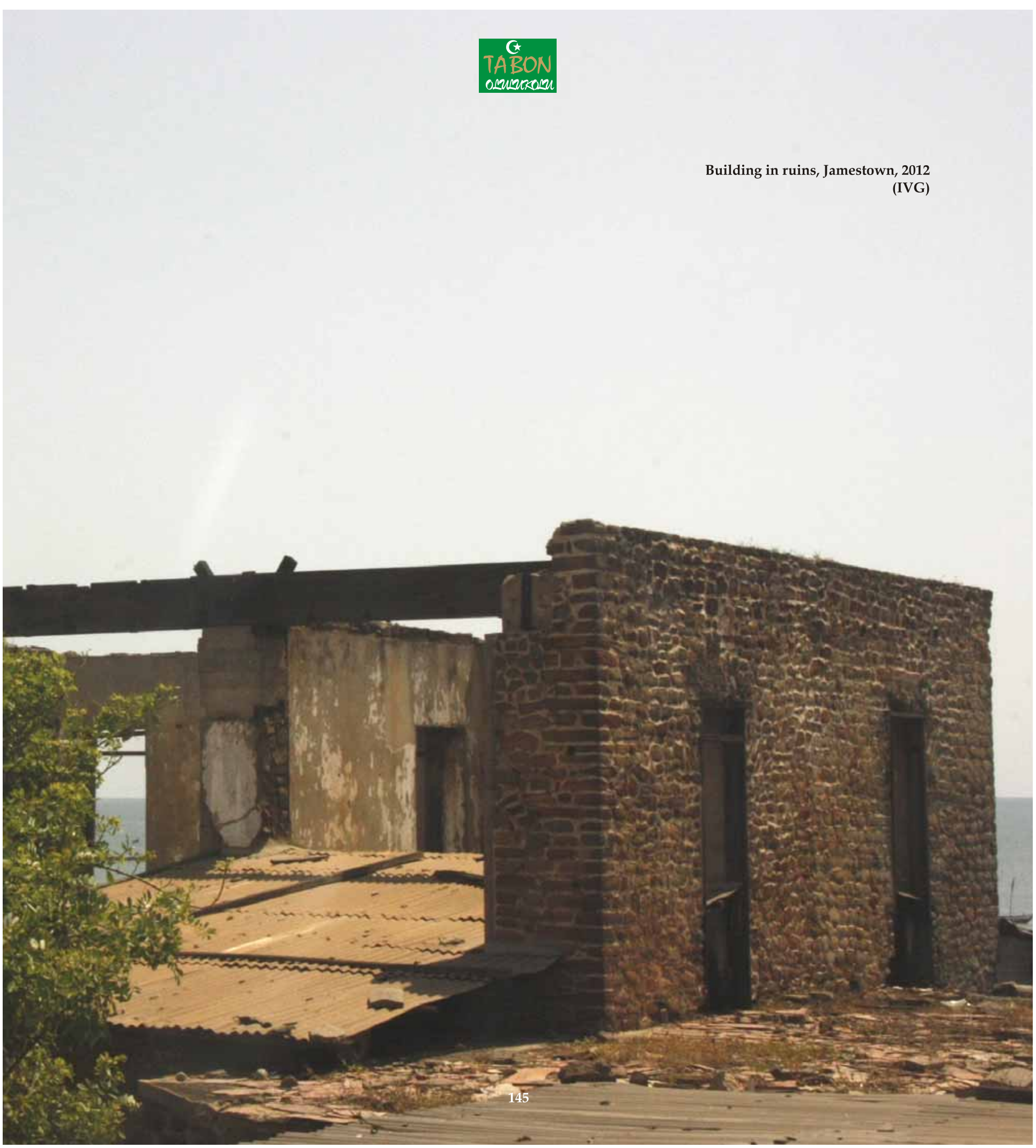
39: Probably based on accounts by Nii Azumah V himself, Marco Aurelio Schaumloeffel has written “For the choice of the Tabom chief only two families were considered: that of the descendants of Aruna Nelson and those of Alasha Nelson. It has become tradition that these two families provide alternatively the Tabom chief, although it is not a strict rule” (2008:74).

40: The linguist staff is a common symbol of power in the courts of various groups of Ghana, including the Ga, Ewe, and Akan who call it “Okyeame.” Other carved or forged symbols may appear on top of other staffs including zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures, as well as stools.

41: Schaumloeffel (2008:123) has written “The Tabom flag . . . has a green background and is decorated with a crescent moon and a white start. It is also possible to read the word 'Tabom' depicted in yellow and 'Olulukolu' depicted in white.”

42: Marco Aurelio Schaumloeffel taught Portuguese lessons to the Tabom in 2003-2004 under the auspices of the Embassy in Accra. Classes took place at the residence of the current Tabom chief in the Dansoman area of Accra.

Building in ruins, Jamestown, 2012
(IVG)



Appendix 1

Voices in the Book



Nii Azumah V (Tabom chief): James Abdulahi Nelson (born in 1936) is the current chief of the Tabom. He was elected chief in 1998 and crowned in 2000. His parents were Abdul Salam Nelson and Emilia Tawiah Lamptey Nelson. He traces his Tabom genealogy through both parents. His father was the son of Nii Aruna I. Before becoming Tabom chief, he worked for a company that distributed car parts in Accra for 42 years (Schaumloeffel 2008: 71-73).



Dan Morton (Tabom Chairperson): Dan Morton is perhaps the best known tailor of Ghana and a prominent Tabom. He studied tailorship in Accra and London and led the most prestigious tailor shops in Accra that still make men's suits. He is currently the chairperson of the Tabom and was heavily involved in the process of selection of the last Tabom chief, Nii Azumah V.



Nii Ben Tawiah Quarcoo (Chief's Linguist): My name is Benjamin Tawiah Nii Akrama Quarcoo and I am the linguist of the Tabom Mantse, Nii Azumah V. I am a Tabom and my father comes from Abola Ga Mashie. My grandmother comes from Asere, Frimpong We. King Tackie Tawiah I is my great-grandfather and Robert Nii Azumah Kwofie is my grandfather in the Kwofie family.



Eric Morton (Agbe Chief): My name is Eric Odarkwei Morton and I am the chief drummer of the Tabom. I come from the Nunoo and the Nelson houses in Nmaamnonaa [street in Accra]. My mother's name is Grace Nunoo and her father's name is Nii Zamani Ashirifie Nunoo. She is from Abola Kpatashie, Akwatse We but she grew up in Nmaamnonaa [Street]. My father's name is George Tetteh Morton and he is from Kpone. It is my mother's [paternal] grandmother who is a Tabom. Her name was Aminatu Nelson, a daughter of Nii Alasha from Brazil and Tawiahfio Tagoe, a Ga. I am married with Leticia Ankrah and have three children, Nancy Morton, Jonathan Morton and Henrietta Morton.



Edwin Brown: My name is Nii Akwei Brown. I am a fourth-year music and dance student at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana in Legon. I am 28 years old and have been studying here for the past six years. Edwin Brown's connection to the Tabom is through his paternal grandmother. He is also a percussion teacher for international students in Ghana and regularly performs with various artists in Accra.



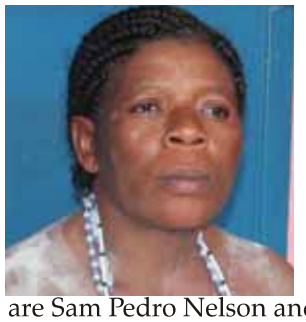
Roland and Rudolph Boye: Descendants of Mahama Nassu living in the Brazil House. Their mother is Christiana Lartey, the current Asafoanyemei of the Tabom. They are both interior decorators.



Salomon Amatey Armah: Salomon is a junior brother of Agbetse Eric Morton. His mother is Grace Nonoo and his father Emmanuel Tetteh Armah and thus relates to the Tabom through his maternal side. He lived in Lagos between 1989 and 2013 where he learned Yoruba and has seven children, five of which were born in Nigeria. He is a mechanical engineer, a Christian pastor, and an amateur musician in Accra.



Naa Awo Gbeke Abiana III - Manye (Tabom Queen Mother): My name is Naa Awodey. I am the Tabom Queen mother. I am known in private life as Georgina Annertey. According to Schaumloeffel (2008:73), she received the stool name Naa Awo Gbeke Abiana III when she was appointed as Queen Mother of the Tabom the same day as the chief in 1998. She is part of the Morton family.



Lekia Nelson (Shango Priestess): Lekia Nelson is the first Shango priestess of the Tabom. She was trained for that role between 2010 and 2014 and officially initiated in July 2014. She is also known as "Number Ten" in reference to the fact that she was the tenth person to be trained by her teacher. Her parents are Sam Pedro Nelson and Janet Ashong. She is a descendant of Aminatu Nelson, a junior sibling of Nii Alasha Nelson and lives in the family house he left in Nmaamnonaa Street.



Naa Afua Aminatu II - Benkum Hema (Queen Mother's linguist): My name is Naa Afua Aminatu II, Tabom Benkum Hema (Left wing Queen Mother). I am the first linguist of the Tabom Queen Mother. I am from Asene Djornshie considering my father's side but my forefathers are surnamed Delgrio (or Del Grio). My current position is as a result of my great grandfather's lineage.



Naa Riza Nelson: My [ancestral] father is Nii Alasha (the returnee João Antonio Nelson). My father's mother is from Gbésè. She was the niece of the Gbésè Mantse who was called Nii Diŋ and gave birth to my father, Nii Azumah Kangidi. A respected elder woman of the Tabom, Naa Riza Nelson advised Lekia Nelson in her initiation as Tabom Shango Priestess.



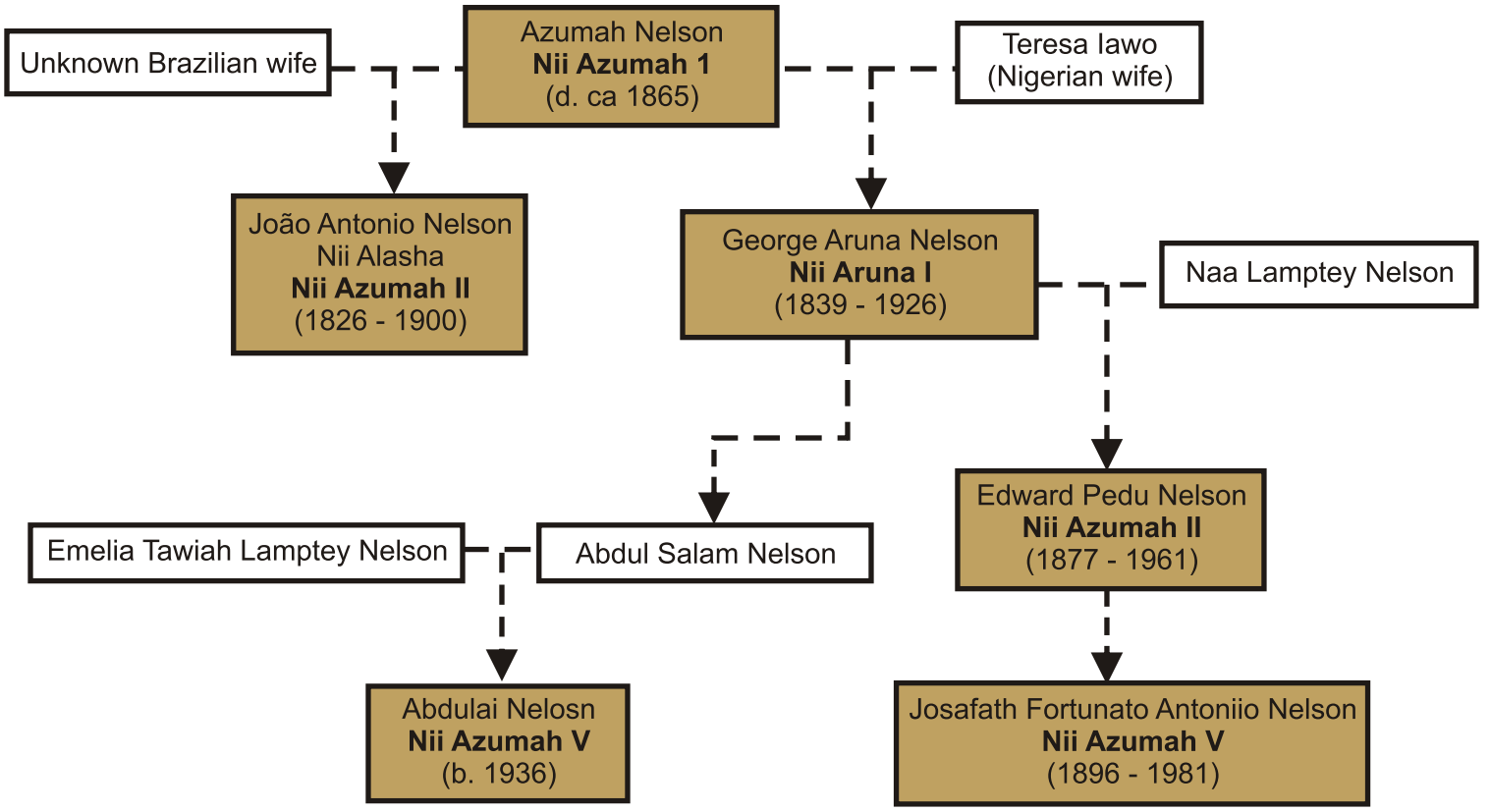
Rebecca Naa Louisa Nelson: My name is Rebecca Naa Louisa Nelson. I work as an administrative assistant with State Insurance Company, SIC, now Insurance Company Limited.

Appendix **2**

Tabom Genealogies

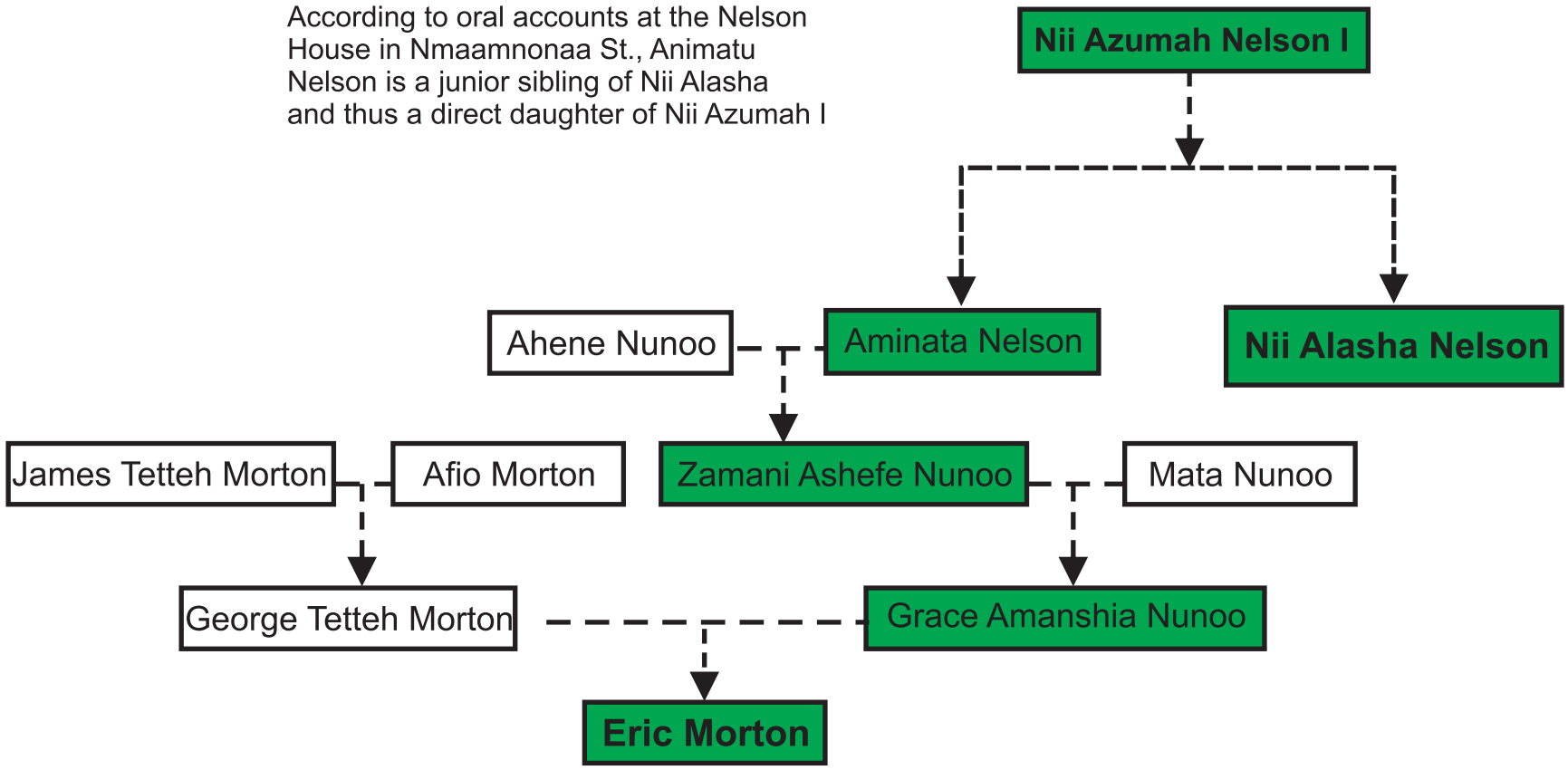
Genealogy of the Tabom Chiefs

Based on oral testimonies by unnamed Tabom
(probably Nii Azumah V and other Tabom elders),
Marco Aurelio Schaumloeffel provided some
genealogical information about the Tabom chiefs (2008:41-71).
The following tree shows the blood relationships between
the six Tabom chiefs as they can be inferred from Schaumloeffel's account.

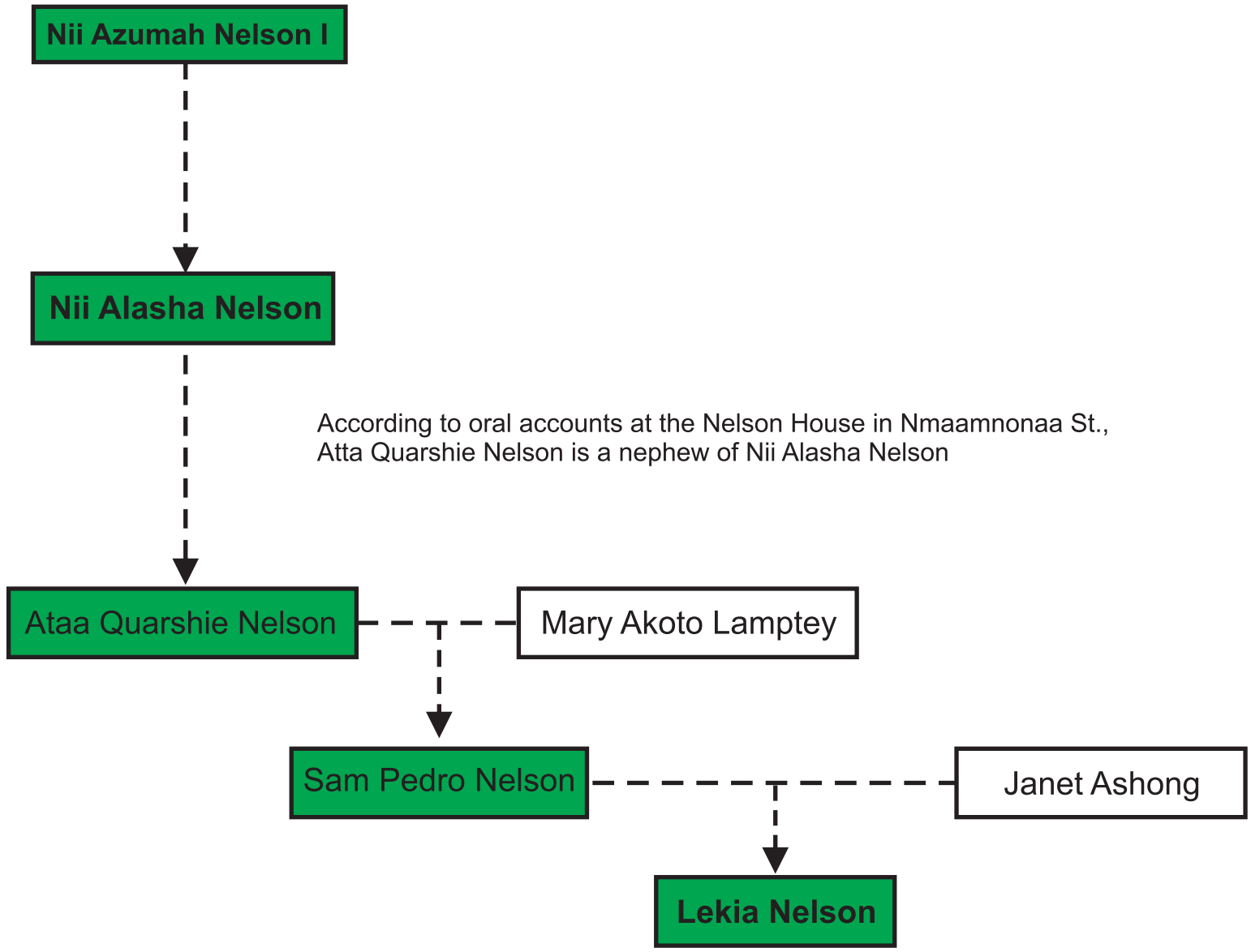


Blood relationships of Tabom chiefs based on Schaumloeffel (2008).

According to oral accounts at the Nelson House in Nmaamnonaa St., Animatu Nelson is a junior sibling of Nii Alasha and thus a direct daughter of Nii Azumah I



Family tree of Eric Morton (Agbetse) built through his (and his family's) memories



According to oral accounts at the Nelson House in Nmaamnonaa St., Atta Quarshie Nelson is a nephew of Nii Alasha Nelson

Family tree of Eric Morton (Agbetse) built through his (and his family's) memories

Appendix 3
Agbe Songs

The repertoire of agbe songs comprises dozens of songs in Yoruba—yet the pronunciation and meaning given by the Tabom to these songs may be different to the pronunciation and meaning that present-day Nigerian Yoruba speakers would assign to them due to the fact that most Tabom do not speak Yoruba. To be sure, some Tabom have learned Yoruba through extended visits to Nigeria and through interactions with Yoruba speakers who settled in Accra since the turn of the 20th century when the British colonial government brought them to fight in the Anglo-Ashanti Wars (Essien 2010:120). Also, Yoruba is not an entirely obscure language for the Tabom as Ga (the native tongue of most Tabom) and Yoruba share numerous cognates and tonality patterns.

The following list of songs was provided by Agbetse Eric Morton, between Sep. 2015 and May 2016. Each song is transcribed phonetically using English characters in italics and is based on Eric Morton's pronunciation. Next to this phonetic transcription, an alternative spelling using a combination of English, Ga, and Yoruba characters is presented between parenthesis. This spelling was provided by Salomon Armah (a brother of Eric Morton who lived in Lagos for 20 years and is fluent in Yoruba) and Beatrice Attonhkai Armah (Salomon's daughter, born and raised in Lagos and also fluent in Yoruba). Songs are accompanied by a free or literal translation also by Salomon and Beatrice, unless indicated.

During agbe performances, these songs are accompanied by the agbe groove in compound meter (with a bell pattern similar to that of the agbadza or atsiabekor dances of the Ewes), except for the viva viva songs, which are accompanied by a groove in simple meter (with a bell pattern similar to that of the kpatsa dance of the Ga).

Song to ask permission to initiate an *agbe* celebration:

Soloist: Ago, ago dabi da wale (Ago, ago tabi ta waálé) Choir: Onile moka ago (oni-le moké agoo)	“Who is in the house? (who is the owner of the house?) I am saying Agoo (hello)”

Song to invite a prominent women to dance *agbe*:

Soloist: Iyalode eba p'Iyalode kowanjo (Iyaálodé ɛbaa kpé iyaálodé kowajo) Choir: Iyalode, Iyalode kowanjo (Iyaálodé, Iyaálodé kowajo) Soloist: Iyalode kowanjo (Iyaálodé kowajo) Choir: Iyalode kowanjo (Iyaálodé kowajo)	“Please call the queen mother to come and dance Queen mother, come and dance”

Song to invite a prominent man to dance *agbe*:

Soloist: Ogongo babaye owo oluwa lee o (Ogongo babayɛ owo iluwa ree o) Ogogo babaye owolu wa lee (Ogongo babayɛ owo iluwa ree) Choir: repeats soloist part	"This is our chief so we must jubilate"

Song to express pride for being Tabom (in Ga):

Soloist: Neke jo ne (nɛkɛ joo nɛɛ) Choir: woman jo ne (wɔ manɳ joo nɛ) Soloist: Tabom bee (Tabom bii) Choir: : woman jo ne (wɔ manɳ joo nɛ) Soloist: Brazil bee (Brazil bii) Choir: woman jo ne (wɔ manɳ joo nɛ) (*)	"This particular dance This is the dance of our land Tabom people This is the dance of our land People of Brazil This is the dance of our land"

(*) Song in Ga, transcribed and translated by Nathaniel Akwetteh

Song talking about the origins of *agbe*:

Soloist: Dabi beru agbe, kim be wa jo (Dabi m'bɛru agbe, kim be wa jo) Choir: Yee! dabi beru agbe, kim be wa jo eee (Yee! dabi m'bɛru agbe, kim be wa jo eee) Soloist: eba beru Ijesha koni bagbe (□ba m'beru Ijesha koni gbagbé) Choir: Yee! dabi beru agbe, kim be wa jo eee (Yee! dabi m'bɛru agbe, kim be wa jo eee)	"We have started playing the agbe dance So, we invite you to come and dance ask in Ijesha and you won't forget that that is where the dance came from"

Song thanking God:

Soloist: Awalama isho omanu (Awɔɳ laámɔ aámɔ ishɔ inu) Olorun omanu (Olorun aɔmɔnu) Choir: Awalama omanu oo (Awɔɳ laámɔ aɔmɔnu oo) Soloist: Olorun omanu (Olorun aɔmɔnu) (*)	"Though we know you, we don't know what's in your head, only God does"

(*) Spelling in Ga by Nathaniel Akwetteh

Song celebrating *agbe*:

Solosit: Esu leva wowa (□su lɛwa wowa) Enyila wa wawo (□niwa ɛlɛ waawo) (*) Choir: repeats soloist part	“We are the ones you want to watch (playing agbe) So, come close to watch us”

Song celebrating *agbe*

Soloist: Agbe, agbe (agbe, agbe) Choir: agbe jakagbe idu, agbe eee (agbe jɛka agbe iduɳ, agbe eee) Soloist: Shekeree, shekere (shekere, shekere) Choir: Shekere jakagbe idu, shekere eee (Shekere jɛka agbe iduɳ, shekere eee) Soloist: Agogo, agogo (agogo, agogo) Choir: Agogo jakagbe idu, agogo eee (Agogo jɛka agbe iduɳ, agogo eee)	“Agbe, agbe This agbe is sweet Shekere, shekere The shekere should make agbe sweet Agogo, agogo The agogo should make agbe sweet”

Song talking about death:

Soloist: Ile o, ile o (Ile o, ilee o) Choir: Ile o, ile o (Ile o, ile o) Soloist: mama lole o (mama lole o) Choir: Ile le lo tarara (Ile ele lo tarara)	“The deceased is going home forever”

Song sending away a deceased person:

Soloist: Koni aya muje (Koni ayé májɛ) Koni aya muje ooo (Koni ayé majɛ ooo) Ema goke maloli (□ma goké malɔ ilé) Choir: Aya uje oo (Aya majɛ oo) Soloist: Ema goke maloli (□ma goke malɔ ilé)	“This is life (this is what life presents) Just climb and go home”

Song sending away a deceased person:

Soloist: Bobo waielo, bobo waielo (Gbogbo wɔ ŋlɔ, gbogbo wɔ ŋlɔ) Choir: Oke shero, bobo uaielo share (Oke shoró, gbogbo wɔ ŋlɔ share) (*)	“Everyone is gone or dead”

(*) Spelling in Ga by Nathaniel Akwetteh

Song talking about God's messages:

Soloist: Kil Olorun shee, kil' Olorun gbaa (Kil' Olorun shee, kil' Olorun gbaa) Choir: Kil' Olorun shee, kil' Olorun gbaa Soloist: Aguda obolio, o bolio (Agudah ogbolio, o bolio) Choir: Aguda obolio, o bolio	“What did God say? What did God do? Aguda people know”

Song celebrating a historical event:

Soloist: Ashante tobi (Ashante 'otobi) kole bawa eei (kolé bawa shé) kole bawa jija, jija (kolé bawa jijá, jijá) kole bawa sha sha sha (kole bawa ṣán ṣán ṣán) Choir: repeats soloist part	“Tiny Ashantis They can't stand us Let's scare them away”

Song about the rain:

Soloist: Canha canha (kanya kanya) bamu talo shé, ea (kpamu italo shé, ea) Choir: Canha canha (kanya kanya) bamu talo shé ojombo (Kpamu italo shé ojombɔ) dia talu de (kia italodé)	“It is cloudy, It wants to rain, Be quick and get away from the open space”

Song about returnee Mahama Sokoto:

Soloist: Mahama Sokoto, Mahama Sokoto Mahama Sokoto, Mahama Sokoto Obalua, Obaluaye, Mahama Sokoto (Oba iluuwa, Oba iluuwa jɛ, Mahama Sokoto) Choir: repeats soloist part	“Mahama Sokoto, the King of our land”

Song with a popular saying:

Soloist: Ekao foushi, kole bajee (Ika fiowo shé, kolé bajɛ) Choir: Ekao foushi, kole bajee oo (Ika fiowo shé, kolé bajɛ oo)	“When money is used to do something, that thing does not spoil”

Song with a popular saying:

Soloist: Miembo ie ie ie, ekulo deo (Mi mgbɔ yee yee yee ekulo deo) Miembo emo si aye (mi mgbɔ aimɔ si ayé) E abiama tu bele koimaaa (ibiamɔ taagba kolémɔ) Abiama tu bele koimaaa, ko paioje (Ibiamɔ taagba kolémɔ, ko kpaiyɔ jɛ) Choir: repeats soloist part	“You have always refused to be cautious you used the prohibited path (or place) Now, death has come for you”

Song with a popular saying:

Soloist: Efo nideelo (Éfɔ nidé oo) Choir: Koredana nidi juma (kolédanɔ nidé jumɔ) Soloist: Aguede nimo su (Ɔgɛdɛ nimɔsu) Choir: Koredana nidi juma (juma (kolédanɔ nidé jumɔ)	“It is evening or late, I couldn't make the time to prepare food so, I roasted plantain”

Song with a popular saying:

Soloist: Keledu pe ouo, ouo ledupe (Kilɛ dukpé owo owo ɛlɛ dukpé) Kilofishe asho, asho lo ofila (Kilɔ fishé ashɔ, ashɔ olo 'fira) Asho kinira, egue, egue oybo (Ashɔ kinira, ɛgbɛ, ɛgbɛ oyibo) Choir: repeats all soloist part Soloist: Ekujalae (☐kuji alé) Choir: Ekujaleo ofo julo (☐kuji alé ofi jilɔ)	“Someone steals money. He is asked what he used the money for. He then says he used it to purchase a whiteman's cloth You are a thief, you have stolen and fled with it”

Song with a popular saying:

Soloist: Bami louo dale (gbami 'lorun jaré) bami louo dale (gbami 'lorun jaré) ofofo uale (ofofo wɔ 'lé) lele tunhanha (ilé tunyanya) bami louo dale (gbami 'lorun jaré) Choir: Repeats soloist part	“Save me from the traitor save me from the traitor when the tattletale come to the house the house disperses save me from the traitor”

Song with a popular saying:

Soloist: Emi shemi toku lansu (Émi shémi tooku lansu) Ikwua lawua lansu (iku arawa lansu) Shemi toku lansu (shemi tooku lansu) Ikwua lawua (iku arawa) Choir: repeats all soloist part Soloist: arawa suku, suku arawa (arawa suku, suku arawa) Choir: Iku arawa ye (iku arawa ye)	“We are crying because of what has befallen on us we are crying because of the death”

Song with a popular saying:

Soloist: Ekpa lode, ekpa lode (Agba lode, agba lode) Choir: Eee a eee (Eee a eee)	“The elder has arrived”

Song with a popular saying:

Soloist: Enipeju aranta (Eni kpéjo laranta) Enipeju aranta Aranta aranta Enipeju aranta Choir: repeats soloist part	““It is he who wants to kill the snake that suffers/struggles”



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A commemorative Plaque in the Elmina Castle
Elmina Castle was built by the Portuguese in 1482 as São Jorge da Mina Castle,
also known simply as Mina or Feitoria da Mina in present-day Elmina, Ghana.
It was the first trading post and remains the oldest existing European building in Sub-Saharan Africa


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